UNUSED RAINBOWS

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

Class BX9333
Book .B3U6
Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

UNUSED RAINBOWS

Unused Rainbows

Prayer Meeting Talks

BY

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D.D.

Author of "Christ and His Friends," "The Unexpected Christ," etc., etc.

Fleming H. Revell Company
Chicago, New York & Toronto
Publishers of Evangelical Literature
MCMI

BX8333
B3U6

COPYRIGHT, 1901,
BY FLEMING H.
REVELL COMPANY

THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
MAR. 11 1901
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
Mar. 9, 1901
CLASS a XXc. No.
4698
COPY B.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Unused Rainbows	9
The Healing of the Hills	15
How to Make a Bible Grow	20
The Black Pickle	24
The Secret of a Light Heart	27
The Lost Chord in Christian Life	32
Sugar-Coating the Ills of Life	36
The Comfort of the Hymns	42
The Happiness of Soul-Winning	47
Living One's Religion	52
The Art of Inspiring Others by Appreciating Them	57
The Oil of Consideration	61
The Characteristics of Goodness	65
Making the Church Beautiful	70
The Christian's Wings	74
Breathing Room for the Soul	79
Streams of Spiritual Life	83
The Lord's Candles	87
The Things That Last	91
Seeing Things as They Are	96
How to Get Rid of Yourself	100
A Crown Full of Stars	104
Is Life Long or Short	109
Multiplication of Blessings through Sharing	113

PAGE

Making Life Peaceful by Making it Important . . 118
A Life on Fire 121
The Difference between Sympathy and Pity . . 125
The Harp-Strings of the Soul 130
In What Respect Can the Christian of To-day Imitate Jesus 135
The Value of Castles in the Air 140
The Risen Life 145
The Beauty of the Summer Fields 149
The Moods and Tenses of Every-day Life . . . 154
The Blessings of Hard Work 160
The First Flush of Autumn 164
The Bad and the Good Kind of Sensitiveness . . 170
Vacation Religion 176
Living Up to Our Visions 180
The Ups and Downs of Christian Life 184
The Christian's Three Homes 190

UNUSED RAINBOWS

UNUSED RAINBOWS

There are still living among the islands of the Penobscot Bay, on the coast of Maine, the descendants of the early English and French voyageurs who came to that land of pine trees more than two hundred years ago. They are a simple, quiet folk, who earn a rather hard living by raising a few sheep, catching fish, and digging clams. Their houses are built of the flat stones that are found on the shore, laid up in mortar made from burned clam-shells and beach-sand, and roofed over with poles and matted masses of long seaweed. President Eliot of Harvard College, who has studied these people on their native heath, estimates that one of these Penobscot Bay hermits can support his island home, even when the family is quite large, on a cash outlay of fifty dollars a year.

In the past the acquiring of that fifty dollars has not always been an easy nut for the islander to crack. But, as they say out West when the railroad comes through a town, "a boom" has

struck the islands of the Penobscot. Within the past three years evidences of prosperity have been seen on every hand. The islanders have been building larger houses, wearing better clothes and more of them, and have generally been putting on more of an air of civilization than they have ever known before. It has not been the return to the gold standard, the change in the tariff, or any other of the changes known to politics, that has brought this wave of prosperity to the Penobscot. No. All this sudden access of prosperity is attributed to the gathering and sale of what is known on the islands as "rainbow driftwood," a kind of fuel which not only gives out heat, but which pleases the eye with colored flames, sometimes showing all the colors of the rainbow. Indeed, this wonderful driftwood has not only the rainbow to recommend it. In addition to the color-tinted flames that beautify the fireplace, the wood appears to be alive, and emits many spluttering and explosive sounds that seem to tell of storms at sea.

The wood has been drifting about the Penobscot Bay and coming ashore on the islands off and on for a dozen years or more, while the inhabitants of the little stone houses with seaweed roofs have been using it for fuel because it was easier to pick up wood on the shore than it was to go into the forest and cut it. They were entirely ignorant of the æsthetic qualities which make this wood the delight of a fashionable drawing-

room on a winter evening. These hermit fishermen are not very romantic; their hard struggle for the necessities of life makes them severely practical, and they would have gone on frying flounders, boiling tom-cods, and steaming clams with wood worth twenty dollars a cord through all time to come, no doubt, if some yachts from New York had not happened to call at the islands three years ago, and discovered how much beauty and romantic novelty was going to waste in those little Penobscot fireplaces. As soon as the fashionable yachtsmen and their lady passengers saw the spiral rainbows coiling around the black kettles and heard the musical echoes of spent storms among the heaps of glowing coals, they wanted to capture some of them for their New York mansions, and they engaged all the wood they could get, paying large prices for it.

The war with Spain came on and disturbed the trade a good deal during 1898, but it has started up with vigor since. The fishermen make a business of collecting and drying the wood, and the returns have been so large that now they cook their flounders and clams on splendid modern stoves and ranges, much like those of the people to whom they sell the wood. Most of this precious fuel is slabs, blocks and edgings that were dumped into the Penobscot River from saw-mills a great many years ago. This drift floated about with the tides and currents until it became water-soaked and went to the bottom,

where it formed great bars that impeded navigation. For the last twenty years the government has been dredging out the channel. That brings this muddy wood up to the surface again, and when it is dumped out into the salt water its enlarged and extended wood cells become depositories for salts of soda and various combinations of iodine and chlorine which give the rainbow tints to its flames and the explosive utterances as if in protest while burning. The great storms that sometimes sweep across the bay cast this "rainbow" driftwood at the feet of the fishermen.

One cannot read of this rainbow wood without remembering two other rainbows of far wider blessing to the world. The first we hear of the rainbow is away back on Mount Ararat, when after their long voyage Noah and his family came out of the ark and built their altar and worshiped God. And the Lord entered into a covenant with them, and promised that so long as the earth remained he would never again destroy its inhabitants with a flood, but that seedtime and harvest should follow each other until the end of time. And when the Lord sought for some appropriate sign that should always remind them of this comforting promise, he selected the rainbow as the most appropriate and beautiful pledge. And so he said to Noah and his children that whenever the storm should come and the rain beat down until their hearts would likely be tremulous with fear after the flood they had

known, when the rain had passed and they saw the rainbow spanning the sky they should remember that this was God's pledge never again to send a deluge of waters on the earth.

The New Testament also has its rainbow, and a very beautiful and precious rainbow it is. We are told about it in the book of Revelation. When John saw the throne of God in his wonderful vision, "there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." What a beautiful pledge of God's mercy and love! We need not fear to draw near to him in repentance and confession of our sins since there is a rainbow round about the throne, for that rainbow means mercy.

On another occasion John saw a mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, his face like the sun, his feet as pillars of fire, and "a rainbow was upon his head." It is thus that our Saviour comes to us from heaven. His face is like the sun, for he is "the Light of the World"; his feet are like pillars of fire, and they show us where to walk. Through all the clouds of our sins and troubles which he carries for us the rainbow upon his head gives us hope and courage, for it shows us that God loves us and is seeking to save us.

But how many people there are who treat this heavenly rainbow as carelessly and indifferently as the islanders of the Maine coast did their precious rainbow fuel! The rainbow about the head

of Jesus and the rainbow around the throne of God which promise forgiveness and hope to them are treated as though they did not exist, and they go on living without comfort or cheer from the heavenly rainbow. We must use the rainbows God gives us if we are to get their blessing.

THE HEALING OF THE HILLS

In the summer days there are many people who, thinking of physical health and a rest of mind and body rather than of that high spiritual uplift which he no doubt meant, are using David's words as they turn away from the rut and routine of business to seek the needed refreshment. It is with a sigh of thanksgiving as well as a deep breath of hope that the tired man says, as he checks his trunk for the high places of the north: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." The hill country has healing in its deep fastnesses for the weary multitudes of the city.

My baby, who has spent the four happy summers of his buoyant life on earth on a great hill-crowned farm in New Hampshire, and who thoroughly agrees with David, was being led in his prayers the other night as usual by his mother. When it came to the place where children of many generations have said, "If I should die before I wake," he suddenly started up with the inquiry: "Who dies us?" His mother was rather startled, but replied as composedly as possible that that was a matter which the Lord took care of. "Well," said the impulsive youngster, "if the Lord dies us, then I don't love the Lord!"

Here was a very startling situation, but his mother still held her ground and told him that the Lord took us to a better place; that if we were good when we died he met us and took us to heaven. Instantly the persistent four-year-old exclaimed: "Is heaven a farm?"

Now I confess that the boy may have inherited some of that, for I cannot think of heaven without something of the freedom and breeziness and out-door feeling of the hills coming into my ideal of it.

The hills are full of healing because it is there that the woods grow in their fullness and perfection. Oh, the blessedness of the woods! The woods are full of bird-nests. There the crows hold their conventions; there the jay birds play their sharp pranks; there the yellow hammer and the woodpecker do their carpentering and exploit their beauty; there the partridge rears her brood and the fox lurks to make a meal of them. Deep in the woods, where the spring seeps out at the head of the little canyon, the ferns, rare and delicate and fragrant, grow in abundance. There the mosses cover the rocks and all nature is sweet and gentle. Even the trees are full of healing; the pine and the balsam fir make the air redolent with a perfume full of God's own medicine for tired men and weary women.

The woods are full of precious things of every sort. Jonathan, David's best friend, once found a bee tree in the woods when he was nearly

starved, and filled himself with the sweet honey. And the record says his eyes grew bright, though they had been dull and lifeless until he found the wild bees' hive. The woods are full of berries—blackberries and raspberries and huckleberries—and if there be a breathing-place in little glades among the forest the wild strawberries stand up on a stem as long as your finger and grow red and sweet in the summer sun.

Margaret Sangster sings of it well in her little poem, "In the Heart of the Woods":

Such beautiful things in the heart of the woods!
Flowers and ferns and the soft green moss;
Such love of the birds in the solitudes,
Where the swift winds glance and the tree-tops toss;
Spaces of silence swept with song,
Which nobody hears but the God above;
Spaces where myriad creatures throng,
Sunning themselves in his guarding love.

Such safety and peace in the heart of the woods,
Far from the city's dust and din,
Where passion nor hate of man intrudes,
Nor fashion now folly has entered in.
Deeper than hunter's trail hath gone
Glimmers the tarn where the wild deer drink;
And fearless and free comes the gentle fawn,
To peep at herself o'er the grassy brink.

Such pledge of love in the heart of the woods!
For the Maker of all things keeps the feast,
And over the tiny floweret broods
With care that for ages has never ceased.

If he cares for this, will he not for thee—
Thee, wherever thou art to-day?
Child of an infinite Father, see;
And safe in such gentlest keeping stay.

The hills have healing in them because it is there the spring brooks are born. Nothing is sweeter than the evolution of a little brook. First, there is the wet, spongy place, where the wild flags bloom, and the ferns are thick; and a little farther down a few drops of water ooze out from under a stone and drop down over another; and a little farther on it begins to trickle and then to gurgle and get a song in its heart, and the birds and the squirrels and the cottontails and the wild fawns drink at its side and thank God. And soon it gets courage and burrows out for itself deep holes under the dark rocks where the trout hide, and then rushes forth over the great boulders and splashes white in the sun, making a sight so beautiful that the little dark water ouzel dives into it for very delight. Thank God for the brook that runs among the hills; the water is sweet and clear and cool, and its whole career, from the time it oozes out from under the rock at the canyon head until it pours its courageous tide into the mountain lake, is full of courage mingled with beauty.

The hills have healing in them because they lift themselves high up to catch the breath of the clouds that do not come down into the low valleys. They get up close to God and speak to him

first, and he gives them gifts to hold as trustees for the wide plains that are far away.

We should learn lessons from the hills. The closer we get to God and the more completely we open our hearts to receive his rich blessings, not only the happier we shall be ourselves, but the more blessing and benefit we shall be to the world. We ought to catch David's spirit, and seek our comfort and our strength from high sources. Whenever men are sick or weak or in trouble there is always a temptation to seek for help from sources that are beneath them. If a man yields to that he is lost. But sickness or pain or trouble may be a blessing rare and precious if thereby we are brought into closer fellowship with the high hills of God.

HOW TO MAKE A BIBLE GROW

Did it ever occur to you that the Bible is a different book for every earnest man or woman? When you think of the Bible you think of your Bible, not somebody else's Bible. And that is but natural, for it is the same way that we judge our friends. Our friend is different to us than he is to any one else, and in our thought of him he is a different man, in many ways, than he is in the mental portrait drawn by some other person whose friendship with him is as close and intimate as our own. So the Bible is a personal book and belongs to each of us in a peculiar way. One of the special blessings of becoming a Christian in youth is that it gives our Bible a good long period to grow in beauty and blessing.

I was very much impressed, recently, in making a pastoral call on a lady who had but a few weeks before been greatly afflicted by the death of her mother, by another phase of this growth and development in a Bible. The mother, who had gone away to heaven, had been a very devoted Christian woman through a long life and had dearly loved her Bible. The sorrowing daughter brought me that precious book to examine. It was an old-fashioned looking book, bound in the thick leather so common a hundred years ago.

But thick and heavy as the binding had been, it was pretty well worn through, and was frayed at the edges from much use. And a great many chapters showed the evidence of having been read and re-read over and over again.

One very interesting characteristic of this Bible was that a great many places were marked with the occasion when they had been used to the dear woman's comfort. Here was one that was read at the funeral of her child. Here was another that had been her comforter when she was sick. Here was still another that she had exulted in in a time of great happiness. And so all through the Bible were these little wayside shrines where the good woman had paused in her pilgrimage to worship God, or to find the comfort or the inspiration she needed on hard days, or to give expression to her joy and gratitude in times of happiness and rejoicing.

I was greatly interested at hearing the daughter tell how delighted she had been to find that many of these passages which had been such a comfort to her mother were now of the greatest possible comfort to her, though she had never noticed them with any particular interest until after the great sorrow of her mother's death came upon her. And with tearful eyes she turned to me and asked: "Why is it that these verses which I did not before care for seem so new and precious to me now? Is it because my mother loved them so, and I loved them on her account?" I told

her I thought there was a deeper reason for it. Her mother had found the comfort of these heavenly words in times when great sorrow and trial had come to her own life, and had marked them then, and the daughter now rejoices in them because she has grown into the same experience. She has grown up to her Bible. She had not found them before because she had not specially needed them, but now that she needs them they are waiting there, running over with blessing and comfort.

As I handed back the worn and soiled book I said: "That book must be a great treasure to you these days!"

"Ah, yes," was her answer, "a big fortune would not buy that book from me. When I see that, mother seems nearer to me than at any other time. I see her again in her rocking chair by the window with the Bible on her knees and the old far-away look of heavenly peace on her face."

I walked away from that home thinking how many people there are who are losing beyond all possibility of recovery by not planting out a Bible in youth, so as to have it growing and blossoming and bearing its fruit through all the years of life.

To make a Bible grow well it must be well tended; you must dig about the roots; find out the deep, hidden meanings that lie underneath the surface; rejoice in the spiritual suggestions that come only to those who dig for them, who

seek for them as a miner digs for gold. A Bible to flourish must be well watered; watered with tears of repentance as well as with the tears of thanksgiving and gratitude. It must have lots of sunshine and air; its pages must be turned frequently and given a breathing chance in influencing and molding your life. When you are sad you must go to it for solace; when you are glad you must go to it for words of praise; when you are earnest you must go to it for inspiration to do daring deeds; when you are discouraged you must go to it for the good cheer that will give "songs in the night." Air your Bible in this way, and it will never get old or dry. It will keep new and fresh, and out of such old pages as the "Shepherd's Psalm" or the "Twelfth of Romans" or the "Thirteenth of First Corinthians" or the "Third of Revelation" there will spring up new fountains of water that will make glad the desert places of life and cause the roses to bloom from out the parched ground of trial.

THE BLACK PICKLE

I had the privilege, lately, in Newcastle, Pa., to spend several hours in the largest tin-mill in the world. Steel bars are brought in and rolled into plates. When these have come to the proper shape and thinness they are put through a pickle which is called "the black pickle." This pickle is made of a very strong acid, which cleans off the scales which have been formed on the plates during the heating and rolling necessary to bring them to the proper shape. After this pickling process the plates are put into great annealing-pans, and are run into a furnace where they are kept ten or twelve hours at a dull red heat. They are then run through the rolls cold three or four times, after which they are annealed again at a lower temperature; and then they are given what is called "the white pickle," which is not so strong as the first, and is intended to scour and beautify the plates. They are then ready to receive the plating of tin which fits them for their commercial use.

As I watched this very interesting process, it seemed to me that that was very much the way in which God makes men and women into good Christians. We have to go through many a roll-

ing and crushing process, humiliating to our pride and self-sufficiency, before we can be brought to the proper shape in which God can use us. Then, if there be scales and rough edges which have come to us in the experience of life, God often puts us into a pickle of discipline that brings us out smarting, it may be, from the sharp acid experiences through which we are compelled to pass, but brings us out with many of the little scales and meannesses of life taken away. Then God has his annealing-pans where we are compelled day by day to remain in the hard, steady heat of constant toil under the heavy strain of trial; but if we do not rebel against God's providence, and yield ourselves to it in a submissive spirit, there will come a time when God will put us through the white pickle, and we shall know gentler experiences that are meant to beautify us, and make our characters attractive and gracious, and finally we shall come to be the perfect men and women that he wants us to be.

I picked up one of the tin plates that had just come out through the rollers after its bath in the boiling hot tin, and was astonished to see that I could behold myself in it as in the best mirror. So God cannot be satisfied with us until, through the chastening and discipline of life, he brings us to such a submissive and flexible and gracious spirit that we bend ourselves with perfect readiness to fulfill his purposes and our hearts are so purified from all the black scales of self-indul-

gence and pride and sinful desire that they are a mirror to his blessed face and he sees his own divine features reflected in our thoughts and ambitions.

THE SECRET OF A LIGHT HEART

I have no faith whatever in any quack remedies for so curing the ills of life that one may be permitted to live and work, fight life's battles, and at last meet the great enemy with a cheerful face and a light heart. But there are certain great causes which always produce certain results, and it is well for us to be thoroughly intrenched in the knowledge that may help us to be thus equipped for the duties of life, for next to having a pure heart there is nothing can come to us in this world so good as a heart that is light and glad, that goes bounding along the way, happy to be alive and busy about its work.

The world is full of heavy-hearted people. We meet men and women every day of whom when we look into their eyes we know that their hearts are like lead. Sometimes they are rich people who have in abundance the things that men most envy; but neither a soft-cushioned carriage with thoroughbred horses nor a richly-caparisoned yacht with fast-speeding sails is able to outfly the enemies of gladness which load down the human heart with burdens that the world has no power to take away.

I am convinced that no message on this subject is of any value unless it may apply to us all alike,

rich or poor. It must be universal, and within the reach of every one, to be of any great comfort. But there are some things that can always be depended upon to lighten the heart of its load.

I think the first secret of a light heart is friendship. We can never be quite in despair so long as we are conscious that we have good, strong, noble friends whose hearts are true to us. It is a great mistake to live in this world without cultivating friends. I do not mean doing it in any commercial way in order that they may stand by you when you need them; but I mean that our hearts should come into sympathetic touch with good people, so that we shall draw daily gladness and sunshine from the knowledge of their sympathy and appreciation. We must not forget that the basis, or rather the nucleus, around which all our great friendships must gather is our friendship with Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples, and through them to us: "I have called you friends." If we are living in a relation of friendship with Jesus, then we have constantly one great window of light into our hearts.

Another secret of a light heart closely akin to friendship, and indeed only another phase of it, is in the consciousness that some people who know you well think well of you and regard your work with kindness. The action of such a consciousness is very quick. Who of us has not risen in the morning from an almost sleepless night, gone through the breakfast without enthusiasm or

appetite, and thought of the work of the day to come with fear and trembling; but the postman brought with him a remedy all but miraculous in its effect? It was in the shape of a letter full of thanksgiving and appreciation and breathing a kind regard. How quickly it acted on the tired nerves! The headache was swept away at once; all the languidness was gone. Life was worth living; your work was not a failure after all. Somebody cared and admired, and so you went to your work with a glad heart and faced the day with music in your soul.

Now it is always possible for us to have that kind of help to give us good cheer for the beginning of the day. For if we live honestly toward God, living up to our light, trying to please God in everything, we shall certainly have the consciousness that God, who knows us better than any one else, is pleased with us. He knows that our work is worth while; he knows us clear to the core, and he smiles. Is it not true that much of the unrest and disquietude of soul from which we suffer comes from the feeling that, however much other people may be pleased with us, God is not pleased? There is only one way to lighten your heart of that feeling, and that is "make it up" with God. I have known friends to be at outs because one had wronged the other, and all joy and peace were gone, faces lowering, and hearts heavy. Then I have seen them afterwards when frank apology and confession had been

made, and the wrong-doer had been forgiven, and faces were bright and shining; hearts were light as a bird's wing. We have wronged God, and our hearts are heavy. The way to get them light and happy is to frankly confess our sins and receive forgiveness.

Another secret of a light heart is a consciousness that we are helpful. I have always noticed that it is more likely to be the person in a family who is waited on and petted and spoiled by all the others who is heavy-hearted, than the one who carries most of the family burdens. Selfishness never has any wings. Selfishness is like heavy dough that will not rise, but sinks together, soggy and sour. You might as well fill a ball with lead to make it bounce as to fill your heart and life with selfishness to make it cheerful and happy. Jesus was happy, though he saw the cross before him, because he saw how much he would help and bless the world. So not one of us will ever see a day so dark, or will ever know a time when our hearts will be so depressed, but that the consciousness that we are helping somebody, and that our work is making it brighter and happier for another, will bring a ray of cheerful sunshine home to us and make life bearable.

Finally, a certain secret for a light heart lies in the assurance that this is God's world and not the devil's, and that though we cannot see how it may be coming out for the best, God does see; and though we do not behold it, there is a bright

side to any present difficulty, and ere long the bright side will turn itself toward us, and God will make us know that all things are working together for our good.

Count them over again for your soul's comfort, these secrets of a light heart: Friendship, appreciation, consciousness of being helpful, and God's guidance. Now any one of these could keep us from despair, but every one of us may have them all. You may have them just as surely in the narrow path of the wage-earner as if your income were counted by millions. You may have them in the kitchen or the foundry as certainly as in the parlor or the counting-room. They are within your reach because you are men and women, children of God; and they are doors which God sets before you, and which no man or woman other than yourself can shut.

THE LOST CHORD IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

There is no more vigorous statement in the Bible than the statement of the Lord in the third chapter of Revelation concerning his distaste for a lukewarm Christian life. How sharp and clear-cut is the declaration: "So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The trouble with these people was that the heat had gone out of their religion. It was not entirely frozen up, but there would have been more hope of obtaining service from them, perhaps, if they had never been heated with religious fervor than there was after they had fallen into that lukewarm condition.

There is a certain pungency that belongs to some things, and if you take that away, although it may look very much the same, it is absolutely worthless. It is like the salt which, having lost its savor, is good for nothing, and can only be cast out on the waste heap. It is like the yeast that had lost its power to leaven; it is as useless as a piece of earth or stone. It is like a seed when the undiscoverable and indescribable principle of life is gone; it is useless. So there is a something between hot water and lukewarm water that, having disappeared, takes away all

the value with it. Really hot water produces steam, but lukewarm water produces nothing but disgust. These people had lost the power to boil; they had lost their steam in religious life. There was no rush of spiritual emotion; there was no glow of inspiration; there was no effervescence of religious feeling; there was no bounding of enthusiastic joy.

It is not always easy to explain the difference between two Christians, one of whom is lukewarm and the other steaming with spiritual life; but we all recognize the difference at once. The one depresses us spiritually, and the other arouses us. When we come in contact with a Christian personality whose enthusiasm is always in a glow it brightens and sparkles and runs over into our own natures. It thaws us; it warms us when we come near to it. When people are in that condition they respond readily to the influence of the Spirit of God. Philip, the evangelist of the early Christianity, was a man of that type. An impression from the Spirit of God sent him into the desert; another impression from God's Spirit sent him climbing into the chariot beside the eunuch, where his overflowing Christian faith won the man's heart to Christ.

Now, the engineer, when he finds that his steam has gone down, and the water is lukewarm in the boiler, knows that only one thing can save him, and that is a new fire under the furnace. And so when a Christian finds himself in a lukewarm

spirit—a spirit which is distasteful to his Lord—the thing for him to do at once is to fire up. The reading of the Bible and prayer will help, but many people die down into lukewarmness for lack of exercising their abilities for the Lord.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's daughter relates an occurrence which took place soon after the removal of the family from Cincinnati to Brunswick, Me. On a cold day, when the ice had formed over a little pond near their new home, Mrs. Stowe called the children to go with her. Then, full of enthusiastic memories of her childhood days in Litchfield, Conn., she herself ran and slid on the ice, but on looking back saw that the children had not followed. They were huddled in a little group on the bank. Then for the first time it occurred to her that this was their first experience with ice, and she hurried back to them, exclaiming: "Well, I feel as helpless as a hen who has hatched ducks."

We can all imagine how soon a little experience taught those children that their feet were adapted to slide on the ice and awoke their dormant enthusiasm. So there is in every human heart the capacity for the enthusiastic love and service of Jesus Christ. But as the child must learn the intoxicating delight of feeling the gliding ice under his feet and the breath of the wind on his cheek in order to enjoy the skating, so to put our religion at the boiling point we must thrust ourselves into the midst of the fight, we must take

hold upon whatever service offers, and give ourselves up to it with devotion. As we work, the enthusiasm, the gladness, will come.

Let no one undervalue the importance of this vital breath of Christian life. It is very little we can do without it. And we are not only helpless ourselves without it, but we lower the temperature of the people around us who would make steam if we did not drag them down by our lukewarm condition. Let us sing with Charles Wesley:

Oh, that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow.

SUGAR-COATING THE ILLS OF LIFE

I suppose there are few people even among the most faithful and loyal Christians who have not at some time in their lives wondered at that strong and vital declaration of Paul: "All things work together for good to them that love God." While all who go forward faithfully to do their duty, walking by faith where they cannot walk by sight, come at last to rejoice in the truth of that promise, I think it is very wise for us sometimes to bring before our thought the simple and understandable ways by which God brings the promise into realization in the ordinary life illustrated in the experience of all of us. It will surely take away the bitter taste of the ills we have to endure to feel that we are getting more than value received for the endurance.

One of the common ills which most of us have to meet is the poverty and narrowness of our means. There are comparatively few people in the world who are not compelled to hold daily counsel with themselves in order to devise ways and means by which they may keep their expenses within their income. But this poverty has many blessings. It does much for every one who accepts the situation cheerfully. First, it makes us self-reliant. We are self-supporting. There

is in that thought a great joy. It adds to our self-respect. It enlarges our manhood or our womanhood to feel that we are giving an honest return for our living. Second, it inspires in us loyalty and fidelity of character. We cannot go star-gazing; we cannot be careless or indifferent. We must fulfill our obligations. That is a great safeguard to character. Third, it binds families together in a bond of fellowship far stronger and more sacred than that ordinarily known among people who do not have to co-operate in their toil in order to bring the needed comforts and blessings of domestic life. No man can measure how much happiness that adds to the world. Fourth, it gives a sympathy with other workers that nothing else can give. It is "a fellow feeling that makes us wondrous kind." And, finally, though I might add many other blessings to the number, it has a tendency to keep us in a spirit of humility, and keenly alive to a sense of dependence upon God, which is the proper and only wise attitude for any man or woman. Riches often cause people to feel that they can get along without the Lord, and thus bring them to destruction. If it is our poverty and our toil that keep us close to God, then how thankful we ought to be for their medicine and discipline.

Sickness and pain suggest another of life's ills which often seems mysterious to us, and from which we naturally desire to be relieved. But as some one has said, "A man's sick bed is often

God's flower bed." The suffering of the body not infrequently is the cause of the enriching and beautifying of the spirit. There are many plants that have to be crushed to bring out their fragrance, and there are many souls which never grow into sweetness and never give forth the perfume of the Christian graces until their weakness and pain bring them into humility before the Lord.

Failure in our plans and purposes, whether of a business or social nature, is often a bitter and a severe trial for a proud soul. Perhaps some one is saying, "Surely there is no way of sugar-coating a failure so that it may seem bearable." But there is a very wise and genuine way of doing it. All it requires is that we shall properly appreciate the purpose of our living here. We are not in the world to win a fortune for somebody to quarrel over after we are dead. Nor are we here to make a brief display before men and women whose earthly lives are as frail as our own. But rather we are here to build up characters that shall be enduring. And everything we undertake to do with an honest, true purpose, and to which we devote ourselves with a manly or womanly spirit, leaves its deposit in character. Our business venture may succeed or fail; our benevolent purposes may win applause or they may bring on us a sneer; but that has nothing whatever to do with the great result which God is seeking in us—the building up of a good, strong, pure man or woman. So it is often that one man's failures

are infinitely more precious and glorious in the eyes of God than another man's successes. Do you think there is no relief in that? There is infinite comfort and relief in it. If we have done our best, honestly and faithfully, performing what seemed to us to be our duty, then we have no reason to have the blues or be depressed though we have apparently failed. We may have failed, but God has not failed in building up in us the character which he loves.

But there are tenderer ills and sorrows which get still closer into our heart's citadel than those I have mentioned. For instance, the loss of the friendship or love of those in whose appreciation we have sunned ourselves and whose sympathy has added so much to life's sweetness and happiness. Through some misunderstanding, it may be, or it may be through a better understanding, our idol has turned to clay; or the drift of time, like the sweep of the current, has separated us, and is ever more and more separating us from the friendship which has meant so much in the past. Can there be any good in that? Yes, indeed, there can be much good in it. Friendship and love are divine gifts and are never given to true souls in vain. No honest man or pure woman has ever yet given the heart in a sincere friendship or in genuine love without being made larger and nobler and more splendid in his or her nature. The friend may be lost; but that enlargement of soul, that widening of the mental

and spiritual horizon, that deepening of sympathy, is not lost, and never can be lost. And so it is true that thousands of men and women who have lost their dearest friends and the fondest loves of life, and have gone on alone without them, have thanked God, even through their tears, for the enriching of the soul by the blessed gift of a great friendship or an unselfish love.

Others there are whose friends have taken wings and flown away to that realm from which no traveler returns. We went with them as far as we could, like Paul's friends who went with him to the ship when he set sail from Miletus. We went down to the very valley of shadows and on to the brink of the river with our loved ones. There we could only say our prayer for them and bid them farewell. But, thank God, we "sorrow not as others which have no hope," for we shall see them again and clasp hands with them in eternal reunion. Heaven will not make them forget us, and what is left of earth will not make us forget them. Love is so vital a plant that death itself is not a winter long enough or cold enough to kill it or to rob it of its power to blossom. And so we may think of our dear ones whom we have "loved long since and lost awhile" as only gone before us, and whose presence and fellowship shall seem all the more precious to us in heaven because of this absence.

And so of all of life's ills and sorrows it is easy to show the "silver lining" within the clouds.

And though there may be ever and anon perplexing experiences too deep for our line to fathom, if we go onward with faith we shall not long be kept in doubt of God's meaning. Soon our hearts will rejoice in the consciousness of God's wisdom and mercy and in the evidence of his goodness that will teach us that Paul never said a truer thing than when he laid it down as a law of universal application that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

THE COMFORT OF THE HYMNS

I am sorry for the man or the woman who has not so absorbed the great Christian hymns that they have become part and parcel of the heart's life. Nothing else save the Bible has such power to give cheer and courage and support in all the emergencies of life. The Christian religion is a singing religion; it makes music in the heart and it easily adapts itself to music. We do not always want the same hymns, but the sweet singers of Israel have poured forth from their deepest souls such a variety of themes that we may all find expression in them for our feelings and for every emotion that the winds of life awaken in our hearts.

There are times when our exultant souls are ready to sing with Charles Wesley:

> O for a thousand tongues, to sing
> My great Redeemer's praise;
> The glories of my God and King,
> The triumphs of his grace!

There are other days when the faith needs steadying, when we are in the midst of trial, and have to walk by faith and not by sight. Then we need George Keith's old "Portuguese Hymn" on which to plant our feet:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

There are occasions when the heart dwells in the land of pathos and tears are not far away; when the spirit is set to a minor key. How sweet then it is to sing with William Cullen Bryant:

Deem not that they are blest alone
Whose days a peaceful tenor keep;
The anointed Son of God makes known
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

Or, with Oliver Wendell Holmes, to the same tune of Dwight:

Oh, Love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while thou art near.

There are hours when memory rises to the throne, and we recall the gladness of our hearts when first we knew the Lord; the first happy day of our conversion comes back to us. Perhaps it is the conversion of some one else whose glad testimony brings back with sweet tenderness the memory of our own, and then there are no words for us like those of Philip Doddridge, to the tune of Rockingham:

O happy day that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

There are still other experiences that make life seem narrow and hard to us; days when the misunderstanding of friends, the unjust and cruel criticism of enemies, trouble us and seem to shut us into a lonely little world of our own. Ah! in such an hour how the heart takes wing in Faber's sweet hymn:

> There's a wideness in God's mercy,
> Like the wideness of the sea;
> There's a kindness in his justice,
> Which is more than liberty.

By the time we have reached the third verse the heart begins to lose its bitterness, the healing balm of the message begins to have its effect, and we revel in the melody of the precious lines:

> For the love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind;
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind.

There are days when the fight is on us, and we must take up our weapons and go to the front and stand on the firing line, and do our duty bravely as soldiers of Jesus Christ. At such a time when the devil tempts us to think we are harshly treated, and the soldier spirit is getting low in our thoughts, how some of the grand old battle songs of the church revive our fainting spirits! How many a half-fainting soldier has been inspired with that glorious bugle blast of Isaac Watts:

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?

No matter how hard the battle, nor how weary we have been with the long march, by the time we sing that hymn through to the martial strain of old Arlington we are ready to shout before we are done:

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh.

No place in life is so dark that the great hymn writers have not been there before us and left songs to comfort us. Does fortune and health and strength seem to fade, still we may sing with Mrs. Bonar:

Fade, fade, each earthly joy;
Jesus is mine.
Break every tender tie;
Jesus is mine.
Dark is the wilderness,
Earth has no resting-place,
Jesus alone can bless;
Jesus is mine.

Have our friends gone away into the future, whither we cannot go with them? And do we follow on with trembling steps, uncertain of the path? How the words of Newman comfort us:

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

And as we sing the holy light falls round us, and our mellowed hearts gain courage to trust God as we say:

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

And so there is not a day that passes over our heads but some sweet hymn, like "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," or "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," or "Nearer, My God, to Thee," feeds our hearts with the bread of life.

Let us learn the hymns, commit them to memory, treasure them up, and they will grow more precious to us as the years go on. And after a while, when we have ceased to sing on earth, the longing of our hearts, which we have sung so many times, will be gratified:

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOUL-WINNING

The writer of the book of Hebrews makes a very striking statement concerning Moses when he accounts for the refusal of the great law-giver to accept a position as a courtier in Egypt, a place of high honor and wealth as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and his deliberate choice to suffer affliction with the poor and despised Hebrews, as being because he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses expected to get more happiness, more joy and peace, more splendid results, by enduring the present poverty of his people in Egypt and insuring his peace with God and his future joy and triumph. And Moses got his reward. What a splendid reward it was! No doubt, at the time, many a joke was made, and many a sneering comment went from lip to lip among the young nobles and hangers-on around the court of Pharaoh, concerning "that young fool Moses," who had thrown away such a brilliant career to cast his lot among a company of slaves. But when Moses followed the pillar of fire through the Red Sea, and stood victorious on the other side, while those same young lordlings were washed up dead on the shore, the sneer had lost its point. Moses' life widened and enlarged from the very day he made that noble choice, and

God rewarded him richly in this world, and he has been having his reward in heaven for thousands of years.

So it is all right to look on the reward side of Christian work. Even Christ followed on the path toward the cross "for the joy that was set before him." Let us look for a moment at the several kinds of happiness which come to those who devote themselves to winning souls to Christ.

First, there is the happiness of noble work. There is a joy in the exercise of one's gifts. There is a joy in simply exerting one's powers. This is true of mere animal life. The hunter or the fisherman will work hard all day long in pursuit of game from the mere joy that comes from action and from triumphing over difficulties. The soul-winner has that kind of joy in its highest form. He has the joy of using his noblest powers in the pursuit of those whom, if he succeed in winning them, he will not hurt or destroy, but bless in the highest possible degree. The hunter must kill in order to have the sweets of victory, but the soul-winner has the higher joy of making alive. If those who are full of lethargy and negligence in Christian circles could experience for a little while the thrilling gladness of winning a soul from sin and bringing it as a trophy to the feet of Jesus, they would realize how tasteless is an idle life compared with the life of a soul-winner.

Another kind of joy comes from the sense of

knowing that we are right. This is the joy that nerves the arm of the reformer who fights against odds and yet whose soul is filled with peace because he is sure he is doing his duty and is pleasing God. The men and women who are giving their hearts up to winning other souls from paths of sin and turning them to righteousness never doubt that they are pleasing God. They know that he who loved lost sinners sufficiently to come down to earth, putting aside all the glory of heaven and giving himself up to a life of poverty and suffering, finally dying the cruel death on the cross that he might save them, will be pleased through and through when his disciples seek to win these ransomed souls from the mire of sin and bring them as jewels for his crown. That is a kind of joy in which there can be no sting of bitterness or regret. Some joys are mingled with sorrow, but the joy that comes from knowing that you are pleasing God, that you are making happy the heart of Jesus by winning your fellow-men to a better life, is a joy that has no shadow on it.

Another happiness comes to us from making other people happy. That, indeed, is one of the greatest sources of happiness in the world, and no one ever has it with sweeter fullness than the soul-winner. The deepest joy you can ever give to man or woman is to bring to their ears in such an attractive way that they will listen to it the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. It will

not only make them happy, but it will make them springs of happiness that will go on starting up other sources of happiness in other hearts everywhere they go.

Happiness also comes from the gratitude and appreciation of those whom we have helped. One of the sweetest human thoughts that the heart of man is capable of knowing is the consciousness that he is appreciated, that people are grateful because he has made their lives sweeter and richer. The soul-winner knows that joy. For if you win a man to Christ, you not only cause him to love Jesus, but forever after there must be a kindly place in his heart toward you, the cause of this sunburst of joy that has come to him.

Then there is the joy of feeling that we have treasures laid up that can be drawn upon for happiness in what otherwise would be lonely and sorrowful times. The soul-winner has that joy. Memory's storehouses are filled with treasures, reminiscences that recall sweetest victories in winning tempted and tried and sinning men and women to know Christ as their Saviour and friend. It has been my privilege to know a good many soul-winners after they were old and feeble, and were drawing near the end of their journey, and I know that such memories were a constant source of joy—a joy that neither sickness nor poverty nor old age could take away from them.

And these treasures will not lose their value in

eternity. Our temporal treasures, such as money and fame, we must leave behind when we die, and go empty-handed, the pauper and the millionaire alike, into eternity. But the peculiar treasures of the soul-winner grow brighter in the sunshine of immortality, and we shall there know such joy as we cannot now appreciate or understand, in the reward that God shall give us for winning souls.

LIVING ONE'S RELIGION

Gustave Doré, the great French artist, was once traveling in foreign lands. Through some accident he had lost his passport. When he came to pass through the custom house of another country, and his passport was demanded, he told the custom officer that he had lost it, but assured him that he was Doré, the artist.

The custom house officer did not believe him, and said, mockingly, "Oh, yes, we have a good many like you! You are Doré, are you?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then; take this pencil and paper" —and he handed these to him as he spoke—"and prove it."

"All right," said Doré. And with an amused smile playing on his face he took the pencil and began to make a neat little sketch of a company of peasants on the wharf, with their piles of baggage, and the children playing about them.

The custom officer looked on with astonishment for a few moments, as the life-like creation grew under the pencil, and then said: "That will do, sir. You are Doré, for no man but Doré could do that."

That is the way we are to prove our Christianity. We must carry our passport in our every-

day conduct. A Christian spirit which shows itself in smiling face and kindly words and right conduct is the best introduction one can have. Sometimes it is a protection better than any armor.

Many years ago a distinguished physician of Philadelphia left his house one morning, and was hurrying down the street, when he noticed a peculiar and ferocious-looking man whose gaze was fastened upon him. Being one of the most kind and polite of men, he smiled gently, raised his hat, and passed on, when suddenly he heard a shot. Turning, he found that the stranger had just left his home with the insane purpose of killing the first man he met. He was the first man, but his kind face and benign smile had thrown the man off his guard, and the next passer-by had caught the bullet intended for him. That smile and bow saved his life.

The Lord takes care of the weakest things which stand boldly to do their duty in their own place. Paul declares that there is a kind of wise simplicity which outwits the devil: "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The best way to overcome the evil one is to frankly stand by the right, using the common sense the Lord has given us, but living in the spirit of harmlessness taught us by our Saviour.

A herd of five thousand beeves were toiling

over a lonely trail from New Mexico to Kansas, leaving behind them, across the plains and valleys, a swath as bare as if it had been swept by the fiery breath of a simoom. Suddenly the leader of the herd, a huge steer, started back in terror, gave vent to a snort of warning, moved to the right and passed on. Those immediately in his rear turned to the right or left, and their example was followed by each long-horned pilgrim as he reached the dreaded spot. When the entire herd had passed, a wide, trampled track lay behind, but near the middle of this dusty space stood a luxuriant island of grass, three feet in diameter. A herdsman rode up to the spot and dismounted, expecting to find a rattlesnake, a creature of which cattle as well as horses have a well-founded dread. Instead of a serpent, however, the grass tuft contained only a harmless killdeer plover covering her nest, while her wings were kept in constant and violent motion. Seen indistinctly through the grass, she had evidently been mistaken by the steer for a rattlesnake. She did not take flight even at the approach of the cowboy, but valiantly pecked at his boot as he gently pushed her to one side to find that the nest contained four unfledged killdeers. In the story of the little bird you have illustrated the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove which Jesus recommends to all those who follow him.

We cannot carry that sort of credentials in our

lives, however, unless we have real goodness in our hearts. The Saviour says that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The spring on the hillside gushes out, pouring forth the kind of water that is in the secret reservoir in the hill behind it; so, to have good conversation and good deeds coming out to view all the while, there must be a good heart back of them. The clean, frank, open heart—that it is, which, shining in the countenance, speaking in our words, and living in simple deeds, will tell for the truth.

"John," said an artist to a Chinaman who was unwillingly acting as a model, "smile. If you don't look pleasant I'll not pay you."

"No use," grumbled the washerman. "If Chinaman feelee ugly all the time, he lookee ugly." Which is as true of everybody else in the world as of John Chinaman.

But if our hearts are open to heaven's influence and we are really rejoicing in fellowship with Christ, we shall find cause for singing under all circumstances. A friend was one day walking in one of the worst parts of London, where everything was as dirty and hopeless as one could imagine, when he was startled by a bird's song—the clearest, happiest bird note. He looked to see from whence it could come, and saw in a small cage hanging by a poor window an imprisoned English skylark. The cage was small—just a few bits of wood nailed together—but within the cage there was a little patch of green sod, cut

from some meadow. And amid the sod, with wings lifted as if for flight, the brown bird was standing with head turned toward the sun, singing its heart out in joyous rapture amid all the dust and squalor around. So God gives his dearer singers "songs in the night."

THE ART OF INSPIRING OTHERS BY APPRECIATING THEM

Jesus Christ evidently believed that the way to get the best work out of a man was to make him think well of himself. What wonderful thoughts and hopes and ambitions must have been inspired in the hearts of his disciples as they listened to that Sermon on the Mount, when he applied to them, common, ordinary fishermen and tax-collectors though they were, such strange and beautiful phrases as, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and, "Ye are the light of the world." It is impossible that these men could have listened to such words and not have thought better of themselves. If Christ, who was their ideal of everything that was good and noble and wise, saw in them something so splendid as all that, then it was surely worth while to be careful how they lived and what they did.

We ought to learn that great lesson that the way to get the people to do their best is to appreciate at its full value the good which they have already accomplished and the possibilities for good which we see in them. This is illustrated everywhere. The employer who appreciates the work that is done for him and makes his employés feel all the while that he looks on them with an

appreciative eye, will always secure larger results than the man who is forever grumbling and harshly criticising his workers.

The same is true in our social fellowship. If we appreciate our neighbors and seek to magnify their kindness we inspire and encourage them to still greater deeds of the same sort. Often good deeds are frozen before they get into definite form by the coldly critical attitude of others toward the man who would like to do his best.

Mr. Hall Caine, the novelist, recently related the story of a school boy in his definition of his neighbor. He was asked:

"Who is your neighbor, Johnny?"

"Please, sir, the man who lives next door."

"And what is your duty to your neighbor?"

"Please, sir, to keep my eye on him."

There are a great many grown-up people who have that same idea concerning neighborly fellowship, and whenever you get a society in which every one is a detective, looking out for some wrong-doing on the part of his neighbor, every man keeping his eye on his fellow, not with loving appreciation in order that he may rejoice in his good deeds or may help him to something better, but that he may outwit him and checkmate him, then you have a little hell on earth.

Appreciation is the atmosphere in which the best deeds of life must always grow. Little children never develop beautifully in any other atmosphere. One of the saddest things in the world is

to see a little child repressed and discouraged and stunted because at every effort to put forth its budding powers it is met by harsh criticism. On the other hand, what miracles can be wrought with wise appreciation to warm the heart of childhood!

Christian life grows and thrives in the same sort of atmosphere. The young convert who has just broken away from evil habits and from bad associations and come out on the side of Jesus Christ and righteousness, needs more than any other human being the gentle and considerate appreciation of Christians who have been longer on the way. I have known some people who were not very wise or eloquent or rich, who could not do any great astonishing things for the Lord, yet their influence in the church was as "ointment poured forth" because they had appreciative natures that rejoiced in a good deed when they saw it, and they were always looking for that sort of thing, and so every new convert and every weak soul making an honest effort to do right found in them a sympathy and appreciation that was like a summer shower pouring its refreshing streams about the roots of a dry and thirsty plant.

Now it is certainly a very interesting and comforting thing when we can find a beautiful and helpful grace that is within the reach of every one of us, and this is such an one. The poorest speaker can appreciate and welcome the gift of graceful and helpful speech in another. The

man who cannot sing can let his happiness be known in another's music, and the knowledge that the song has given happiness will inspire the singer to nobler melody on the next occasion. And so you may go the whole round of our daily life and you will find that from morning to night you are constantly meeting with opportunities where a word or a look of appreciation will soothe a wounded heart, heal a chafed spirit and inspire a discouraged soul to a new effort to do his best.

It is far more precious and helpful to save people from their defects by pointing out the nobility which is possible to them than by forever holding their defects before their eyes. Christ could easily have found fault with these disciples, and could have discouraged them so they never could have lifted their heads again; but when he inspired them by telling them they were "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth," do you suppose for a moment that their weaknesses, their errors and their sins had ever before looked so mean to them? So if you want to inspire people to do their best don't talk to them forever about their failures, but help them to see the beautiful, splendid life which is possible to them in Jesus Christ.

And in so doing we shall also inspire ourselves. No man can help another to climb upward without lifting his own nature to a loftier altitude.

THE OIL OF CONSIDERATION

I am constrained to believe that carelessness and lack of proper consideration are responsible for a large part of the sin and sorrow of the world. I think there are comparatively few people who deliberately sit down and make up their mind with malice aforethought to do either a wicked or unholy deed toward God, or a malicious and misery-spreading act toward their fellowmen. But the great majority of sins both toward God and man come because we have yielded ourselves to a bad current; we are caught in the drift and are swept along without giving the proper consideration to our deeds. This by no means relieves us of the responsibility in the matter, for we are responsible for the current in which we place ourselves; but it explains why so many people who have many good impulses and are often conscious of good purposes are nevertheless the doers of evil deeds that cause great sorrow. Much of the rough grinding of the wheels of life upon each other would cease their painful grating if we would but pour on them a little of the oil of consideration.

The Psalmist found, what we have often found, that it is very easy for us, living in the midst of all the wonderful works of God, to become

thoughtless about him, so that we look on the beautiful scenery of nature and accept the good gifts of Providence without either reverence or gratitude. But when David was led to consider the heavens, and to think separately about the moon and the stars, and reflect upon their greatness and beauty, and to meditate on the wisdom, goodness and love of the God who made them and fitted them with such care for man's need, then his reverence and adoration were aroused, and he wondered and worshiped. Consideration brought him to his knees, and I am sure we have experienced the same; it is only when we are thoughtless and unreflecting that we are irreverent or ungrateful. When we give ourselves to reasonable consideration we bow down humbly before the Lord and worship him with all our hearts.

In the same way the Saviour aroused the confidence and faith of the disciples in God's providential care. He called them to consider how God clothed the flowers and the beautiful plants of the field, and to reflect that if God would take such care about the coloring of a lily how much more certain was his care about his children whom he had so richly endowed. Strange that any of us should ever allow ourselves to become depressed and doubting in spirit with this abundant evidence of God's care for the smallest creatures all about us! It is certainly because we do not consider; when we consider God's care of the flowers and of the birds, his care over

little things as well as great, our hearts are led to rest in his arms and find peace.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews finds in consideration a cure for carelessness concerning our influence over others. "Let us consider one another," he says, "to provoke unto love and to good works." That is, if we are careless we are likely to fall into the error of thinking that our life is without influence, or that we can afford to be indifferent in regard to others, and that whether we influence them for good or not is a small matter; but when once we consider we are shown the falsity of such a position. When we consider our neighbors and the people about us, and see their needs, and how easily they are swept by every wind of influence from the outside; when we note how easy it is to hurt people or to help them; how contagious are good deeds as well as bad, we see that it is a matter of the greatest importance not for ourselves only but for our brethren that we shall live the very best possible lives that God's grace may help us to live. It is a great encouragement to self-denial and to earnest effort to feel that our lives are a constant inspiration, arousing high ambitions in those who know us.

Another reason for considerateness is expressed by Paul in the sixth chapter of his letter to the Galatians. There he encourages us to arouse our sympathy and generosity toward those who have been overtaken in a fault by considering our own

selves. That is, if we will stop and consider we shall remember how easy it is to fall into temptation, and shall have a fellow feeling for our brother. There is no place where lack of consideration works more harm than in the harshness which it causes, many times, on the part of good people toward those who have fallen into sin. How considerate Jesus was. He never condoned sin, he never made sin seem a small thing; on the other hand, sin never seemed so horrible as when Jesus speaks of it. But how tenderly, with what considerateness and sympathy, does he deal with the sinner in trying to heal him of his sin. The very first element in the composition of a good soul-winner must be this element of considerateness. We must get so into sympathy with Christ's attitude towards men that we shall be able to put ourselves in their place or we can never have for them the sympathy which will attract them to Christ. It is said that in the fashioning of fine vases nothing can take the place of the human hand. The vase much receive the delicate, soft, skillful touch of the human hand to get its final shape of beauty; no machinery, no hard mechanicalness, can do it. So in bringing back a poor sinner to Christ, in binding up his broken and marred life so that it may grow again into strength and beauty, there is nothing in this world fine enough save the sympathetic and loving hand of the brother or sister who is impelled by a heart full of tender considerateness.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOODNESS

Luke in his description of Barnabas has set this seal upon him, that he was "a good man." I think it is interesting to notice some of the things that constitute a good man according to Luke's idea. In the first place, he is a man of faith. Luke follows up the phrase, "a good man," by saying that Barnabas is "full of faith." You never can trust the reliability of any man's goodness unless his goodness is built on principle. Principle is the rock on which the house of character is built, and if a man is good and yet has no good solid principles of faith, he is good simply because as yet he has not been put under severe temptation. The house built on the sand is as solid and as safe as the one built on the rock so long as the sun shines and the winds are still. But when the winds blow and the rains beat down and the floods come, the house built on the sand goes to pieces and is washed away, while the one built on the rock stands as safe and secure as in good weather. So we cannot depend on anybody's goodness unless it has its source in a heart full of faith in God, which is a guarantee for permanent integrity and righteousness. If your goodness comes simply because you have

good impulses, and have inherited a pleasant, cheerful disposition, you will be astonished some of these days when the storm beats on you to see how quick it will disappear. Goodness, to last, must be riveted down, like a lighthouse built on a storm-swept ledge, into the bedrock of a great faith.

Another characteristic of goodness, according to Luke, is that a good man has a very keen sense of the presence of God. "Full of the Holy Ghost" is his way of saying it. To have that a man must be a prayerful man; he must open his heart to the Lord with such reverence and child-like love that God will take up his abode in his heart, and that will insure his goodness. There is never any assurance of a man's goodness if he is godless. But if he lives in the constant consciousness of God's presence, then we feel that his goodness can be relied upon as being a stable and certain quantity.

Another quality of Barnabas' goodness was that he was an appreciative man. He saw goodness in other people, and when he saw it, it made him happy. It is a great window in the character of Barnabas when we are told that when he went to Antioch and saw the great revival that was going on there and the multitudes of people who were being converted, it made him glad, and that instead of throwing a wet blanket over the meeting by a superior critical attitude, he joined in with them in the happiest spirit, and "exhorted

them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Christ tells us that when a sinner is converted on earth the angels in heaven rejoice about it, and Luke gives it as one of the characteristics of goodness in Barnabas that he was glad and happy when he saw people being converted.

Let us never be deceived into imagining that it is any sign of goodness in us that we are all the time seeing the bad spots in people, and that everybody we meet seems to be inferior to ourselves in holiness. Be very much alarmed about yourself when you find yourself in that condition. You may be sure there is something wrong. But rejoice when you find yourself unusually sensitive and alert to detect goodness in others, and to appreciate a disposition on the part of your neighbors to praise God and serve him. A good man longs to see the world converted. He hates wickedness because it grieves God and hurts men. And when he finds good being done, no matter who is doing it, or who is going to get the credit for it, he rejoices.

A still further characteristic of the goodness of Barnabas was that he was a kind and gracious man. So true was this that he was called the "Son of Consolation." We ought to be so truly good that we shall draw people to us, and to Christ because of us, on account of the magnetism of the Christlike kindliness that is revealed in our conduct.

A story is told of Thomas Jefferson that on one occasion he was riding in company with two young men, when they came to a creek so swollen by a shower that the water was up to the sides of the horses. As they came to the stream they saw a countryman standing on the bank carrying a saddle on his shoulders. This man looked earnestly at the young men as they rode into the stream, but said nothing. As Mr. Jefferson came along the stranger asked if he could not be allowed to mount up behind, and thus be carried across. The President of the United States reined his horse up to a stone and the man mounted. When across he expressed his thanks and walked away. Several men who had witnessed the incident asked: "What made you let the young men pass, and why did you ask the old gentleman?"

"Wal, if you want to know, I'll tell you. I reckon a man carries 'yes' and 'no' in his face. The young chaps' faces said 'No,' the old un's 'Yes'!"

"It isn't every one," said one of the party, "who would have asked the President of the United States for a ride."

"What! You don't mean to say that was Thomas Jefferson, do you? Wal, he's a fine fellow, anyway. What will Polly say, when I tell her I have rid behind President Jefferson? She'll say I voted for the right man."

We want to live with such goodness of heart

and graciousness of spirit that our countenances and the daily influence of our conversation and life will welcome men to Christ. We can only do that by living the Christ life, and keeping our heart's welcome for him. If he dwell in us his presence will be known in the gracious benevolence of spirit which clothes us about as with a garment.

MAKING THE CHURCH BEAUTIFUL

I have been reading a story of a man who attempted a very original way of adding to the beauty and attractiveness of the town in which he lived. He had a farm on the outskirts of a little village, and he took great pride in the village and in the roads about it. Whenever he could spare a day, or an afternoon, from the work of his farm, he would drive away in search of some flower or shrub which did not grow at his home, and these beautiful things he transplanted to some favorable spot along the highway or in the woods or meadows of his own town. He continued to do this for many years, and by these little holiday pilgrimages this one man increased the flora of his native community by over a hundred varieties. From being rather a barren town at first, it came to have a greater variety of flowering shrubs and bulbs and trees than perhaps any other town in the State.

Now the special significance of the story of this man lies in the fact that he did not take all these beautiful things and plant them out on his own farm; there would have been no illustration in that of any value, for there are plenty of people who are greedy for beautiful things if they may keep them selfishly in their own lives; but this

man took the whole neighborhood into his view, and sought and labored to make the entire community a delightfully beautiful place of residence.

Is there not a message in this for us in our relation to the Christian church? I think we do not lay enough emphasis in our thinking upon the great necessity of making the church attractive in order that it may be effective in winning men to Christ and in building them up into a holy manhood and womanhood.

We can all understand that, other things being equal, a man who is hunting for a place to buy a farm and settle down to bring up his family would be attracted by a town which had the reputation of having the largest variety of flowering plants and trees in the country. It would make a beautiful place in which to live. The same principle works in relation to the church. If the church is attractive because it is a garden where the spiritual graces abound and because they are cultivated with rare fidelity, not only will those who are not Christians be attracted to it, but it will have the power to charm and fascinate and thus hold those who have already been induced to settle in it. And it will have the power to bless them and strengthen them, and will keep their loyal love and devotion.

A good question for each of us to ask of ourselves is, "What can I do to make the church more beautiful?"

There are several things that the average per-

son can do to add to the beauty and blessedness of a church. First, you can be good. The man who keeps his own life clean and honest helps a great deal to make attractive the church to which he belongs; the power of simple unadulterated goodness can never be overmeasured.

Second, you can be brotherly. We all have social needs. To attempt to shut ourselves up within ourselves is to dwarf and stunt the growth of our better natures. Many people in the cities are constantly put under temptations to evil because they do not have the kind brotherly fellowship which they need among good people. Any one that will cultivate a disposition to be social and gracious, and will honestly try to make friends with the people who come to the church, and will seek to make the people who seem lonely and stiff and formal have a good time and feel at home, will set blooming a wonderfully fragrant tree in the beauty-garden of the church.

There is another thing we can do, and it is within the reach of every one. We can be cheerful. I don't believe there is one man in a hundred, to put it mildly, who appreciates at its full the value of cheerfulness to the people who have to deal with us. There is no place where cheerfulness is at a higher premium than in the church. People come to church usually after several days' intermission of toil and struggle, and are oftentimes weary and bruised at heart. Whether they know it or not, they need to be cheered up.

They need that somebody shall "speak a word in season to him that is weary." When one is in that condition, just to look in the face of some one who is cheerful and happy-spirited, and to receive a kindly word and a hearty hand-shake, is to put new courage into a half-discouraged heart and make life seem worth living again. A very few such people who work at it all the time can make any church in a large city so attractive that it will be packed with people sniffing their sweet perfume.

One other thing is within the reach of every one, rich or poor, scholarly or ignorant, popular or unknown, and that is charity in the treatment of others. I am not speaking now of the giving of money; I am speaking of the charitable spirit in discussing other people. Any person who invariably compels the tongue to speak charitably helps marvelously to make the church attractive and beautiful. The world is such a cold, critical, suspicious, uncharitable place that if you let it get abroad that in a certain church there is an atmosphere of kindness and brotherly love and cheerful graciousness and charitable consideration of the infirmities and weaknesses of others, that church will not be able to hold the people who are wanting to move into that kind of a climate.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WINGS

The devil never deceives men and women more completely than when he makes them believe that the Christian life is dwarfed and cramped and narrow. How he must grin in hideous irony when he sees young men and women turn away from Christ because they want to live a joyous, buoyant and happy life. It is the Christian life that has wings and not that of the worldling or the sensualist.

Christianity ministers to faith and hope, and they are the strong wings of the human soul. Carlyle says: "Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, as soon as it believes. A man lives by believing something, not by debating and arguing about many things." The Christian who waits upon the Lord becomes strong in the great wing of faith. The other wing of hope beats in harmony with it. Blue, depressed, desponding people are always frail and uncertain reeds on which to lean. Paul says, "We are saved by hope." Hope buoys up the soul and encourages it to daring deeds. Given the pinions of hope and faith, and the soul mounts up in trustfulness to fly on the path of duty indicated by the will of God.

Mr. Moody was standing with a dear friend at his garden gate one evening, when two little children came by. As they approached Mr. Moody's friend said to him: "Watch the difference in those two boys." Taking one of them in his arms he stood him on the gate-post, and stepping back he folded his arms and called to the little fellow to jump. In an instant the boy sprang toward him and was caught in his arms. Then turning to the second boy he tried the same experiment. But in the second case it was different. The child trembled and refused to move. The man held out his arms and tried to induce the child to trust to his strength, but nothing could move him. At last he had to lift him down from the post and let him go.

"What makes such a difference in the two?" Mr. Moody asked.

His friend smiled and said: "The first is my own boy and knows me; but the other is a stranger's child whom I have never seen before."

There was all the difference. The man was equally able to prevent both boys from falling, but the difference was in the boys themselves. The first had faith and hope in his father's ability and kindness and acted upon them, while the second had no such pinions and would not risk himself. If we wait upon the Lord and commune with him daily we shall have strong wings that will not fear to dare the upper atmosphere. Christianity develops the spiritual vision so

that like the eagle we may look in the face of the sun.

A gentleman who was traveling through the coal-mining region in Pennsylvania noticed one Sunday a large field full of mules, and inquired of a boy what use was made of so many mules. The answer was: "These are the mules that work all the week down in the mine; but on Sunday they have to come up to the light or else in a little while they go blind." Sin blinds men and women, and there are many who go with blurred and marred eyesight, seeing only dimly, because they do not wait upon the Lord in regular worship. Keep the eyes bent on worldly things long enough and steadily enough, and you will lose the power to see the visions of the sky. Fellowship with God gives us the wings to mount up above petty meanness and selfishness which would otherwise tempt and overcome us.

The story is told of two merchants between whom there was great rivalry. One was converted. He went to his minister and said: "I am still jealous of that man, and I do not know how to overcome it."

"Well," said the wise preacher, "if a man comes into your store to buy goods, and you cannot supply him, just send him over to your neighbor."

He said he wouldn't like to do that.

"Well," the minister said, "you do it, and you will kill your jealousy."

The man was in earnest about his religion, and so finally said he would; and when a customer came into his store for goods which he did not have he would tell him to go across the street to his neighbor. Good deeds are as contagious as bad ones, and by and by the other merchant began to send his customers over to this man's store, and the breach was healed. Jesus Christ lifts his followers above meanness by creating for them wings to rise above it into the holier atmosphere of the heavenly world.

But there are many Christians who do not fly. They are old enough to fly; they have been cared for and fed well enough; but they have not learned how to exercise their wings. Many of these people are having an unhappy time, because God is stirring up their nests as an old mother eagle does when she knows that her birds are large and strong enough to use their wings. The young eagles don't like it at first, and they cry and flutter and have palpitation of the heart; but when they are thrust out and trust the air they soon find what their wings are made for. So God does not give us faith and hope with which to sit on the nest, he does not mean that we shall always be fat weaklings having dainties carried to us by the pulpit; he means that we shall soar abroad on errands of mercy and helpfulness.

When the young eagle submits he is soon rejoicing in the happiness and glory of flight, and looks down with disdain upon the forest and the

valleys and even the mountain tops, exulting in his new-found power. So when the timid Christian submits to God, and ventures all upon his promises, he is soon rejoicing in the new sense of the beauty and victory of the Christian life.

BREATHING ROOM FOR THE SOUL

There is something very suggestive in the thanksgiving which David returns to God for bringing him into a large place. He had been beset by enemies and had been compelled, perhaps, to hide away in a cave and keep in narrow quarters. And so when his enemies were overthrown and he was permitted to go out at will on the mountain or in the valley, to go freely in the open fields or in the town, to breathe the air of liberty with none to make him afraid, he would because of his past experience have a new sense of appreciation of the largeness of an unfettered, uncramped life.

I saw a man recently who after living for many years in the heart of the city had moved out into the suburbs where he had a little ground about, with a chance for a garden and a few apple trees, and I asked him why he liked being out there so much better, and he replied: "Oh, I have a chance to turn round and to breathe."

The soul as well as the body needs breathing room. And to give it a chance to breathe well we must not crowd it too closely with worldly things that can never furnish an atmosphere for it. The supreme folly of the rich man described by Jesus, whom God named "Fool," was that he

undertook to feed his soul on the kind of goods which he could stow away in his barn. Many people are making the same mistake now. They crowd their lives so full of work and pleasure which appeal only to the temporary life that they smother the soul to death.

There are some simple things which help to give breathing room to the soul. One of them is Bible-reading. The best soul atmosphere in the world is that which clings about the Word of God. We have a great deal to say now about condensed foods. And we have exhibitions occasionally showing the marvelous power of liquid air. There is more condensed spiritual atmosphere, if I may so speak, in the Word of God than anywhere else in the world. There are breezes stored up in the Psalms which a man may feel on the inner brow if he gives himself up to them for but a few moments. The water of life springs fresh and cool and inspiring from many a mountain range of Bible prophecy. The fragrance of wild flowers, the charm of water lilies, may be breathed from the sayings of Jesus, and from the incidents of loving self-sacrifice and transformed living which one finds in the stories of early Christianity in the New Testament. If one will give a certain amount of time every day to reverent reading of the Bible the soul will have a chance to breathe.

Prayer is another source of spiritual atmosphere. Quiet contemplation of the divine exist-

ence, of God's nearness, of his loving care, the breathing out to him thanksgiving for past mercies and present joys, and the expression of the longings and desires of one's inner self, is soul-breathing. Especially is this true of secret prayer. To go alone into the closet and shut the door, separating one's self from troublesome thoughts of money and perplexing problems of expediency in daily living, and turning to God seeking his guidance, opening the heart and pouring out its confidence in loving trust to the Divine Friend, is for the soul's breathing like going out of some smoky city, where the air hangs low with fumes of oil and the dust of traffic, into the open country where the breath of the fields and the woods sweetens the clear atmosphere through which the eyes look up to the stars.

Another way through which the soul finds breathing room is in doing good to others. Jesus kept his soul wholesome and sweet during his earthly pilgrimage not only by much prayer and communion with God but by going about doing good. Day by day he had the satisfaction of knowing that his deeds were blessing others, and so his soul breathed constantly this atmosphere of helpfulness and blessing.

No man can have a wholesome, healthy, happy spiritual nature unless he gives the soul breathing room in unselfishly doing good deeds to his fellow-men. Many a man who has been selfish and fretful, unhappy, spiritually diseased, has had

his life transformed into joyous spiritual health by being led into fellowship with Christ while bringing blessings to others.

Dr. Arthur Brooke points out how well Dickens pictures this in his Christmas Carol. At the beginning of the story we have a portrait of Scrooge, a tight-fisted man, hard as a grindstone, sharp as a flint from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire, secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say with happy look, "How are you?" Even the beggar never implored him for alms; no child ever looked up in his face to ask him the time of day. He was rich, but dismal, morose and blue. He had never done good to any one. He had planned and toiled only for himself; but he was visited by three ghosts—the ghost of the past, the ghost of the present, and the ghost of the future—and they taught him a lesson. He became a good friend, a good employer, and a good man, and opened his heart and his purse to others. His soul began to breathe, and happiness and beauty blossomed in the life that had been desolate and barren. I commend to you these three storehouses of condensed spiritual atmosphere, open to all—prayer, Bible-reading and unselfish service for your fellowmen.

STREAMS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Many beautiful and sweet suggestions are found in the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the influence which Christianity is to have upon the hearts and lives of men. It is to open the eyes of the blind, to unstop the ears of the deaf, to make the lame man leap for gladness and strength, and cause the tongue of the dumb to sing songs of grateful joy. It suggests that Christianity is a hopeful religion, encouraging the fearful heart to be strong. Its business is to strengthen feeble knees, and to lift up weak hands. The followers of Jesus Christ have planted rose gardens in many a desert, and every year thousands multiplied beyond number are added to the army of faithful ones who keep step to the heavenly music on that highway of holiness where the unclean do not pass, where no lion shall ever come, and upon which no ravenous beasts shall ever walk.

But I maintain that in it all there is nothing quite so sweet or refreshing as the suggestion that Christ in us will cause living waters to spring up in the parched and desert places of the earth: "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." I have been thinking particularly about this for the last few days, while I have been living up among the moun-

tains, fishing in mountain lakes and wandering beside the rushing brooks that even in the dry and barren summer draw from reservoirs full enough to keep up the music in their hearts. I have been reclining on couches of moss; sniffing the air perfumed with balsam; gathering ferns by the edge of the brooks in the deep canyons, and have been impressed again, as I have been a thousand times before, with the charm of running water.

The stream of water is always alive, ever freshly fed, ever busy on its race from the mountain where it was born to the wide sea where its master purpose is to find fulfillment. I do not wonder that the Bible is full of brooks and streams of running water. It was by the brook Eshcol that the spies found the luscious grapes they brought back to Moses. It was out of a brook that David took the five smooth stones with which he went forth to fight Goliath. And honest-hearted men have been getting power out of brooks ever since. It was beside the brook Besor that David in later years uttered his famous declaration that those that tarried by the stuff should be as honorably rewarded as those that went forth to battle. Clear-eyed vision is born beside the running brooks. It was by the brook Cherith that God hid Elijah and gave orders to the ravens to feed him. When Moses would describe the goodness of God in bringing his people into the land of Canaan he can say nothing

better than this: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." When David would voice the deep hunger of his soul for the noblest spiritual communion, he cannot express it better than to say: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" It was a brook that inspired the Psalmist in the sweetest of all his Psalms, where he thinks of the "green pastures," and the "still waters" by which the Good Shepherd should lead his sheep. It is a stream of running water, a river of life, that John describes as the glory of the new city which was to be the final abode of glorified humanity.

The hymn-writers of the church have often been inspired by the same vision. It tuned the lyre of Isaac Watts when he sang:

> "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> Stand dressed in living green:
> So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
> While Jordan rolled between."

And many other hymns are graced by the pleasing imagery of flowing water, as in the lines: "Streams of mercy, never ceasing;" "Soul-refreshing streams;" "By cool Siloam's shady rill;" "When peace like a river;" "Where streams of living water flow." All these show that the spiritual imagination is charmed and

refreshed by the beautiful symbols of brooks and running water.

What a testimony it is to God's conception of us, that he should choose such a figure to illustrate the influence of a good man or a good woman in this world. The sincere Christian life is to be like a brook of running water—it is to be refreshing, getting its waters ever new and pure from the great reservoirs in the heart of God; it is to be a beautiful life because adorned by the loveliness of the Christian spirit; it is to be a joyous life, musical with appreciation and gratitude for the goodness of God; it is to be a useful life, ever earnestly pursuing its course, led onward by divine gravitation, trusting the God who leads it, turning every wayside mill-wheel it may, slaking the thirst of every fainting one it can, refreshing the soul of every one who comes within its reach, yet never staying with any of these to stagnate, but gathering added courage, pressing ever onward toward the greater sea of effort and achievement to which God is guiding it.

The brook is ever growing. It gathers springs from the wayside to swell its tide. And so your life and mine should grow and enlarge. We should be nobler, stronger, happier, lovelier men and women this year than we were last year. As the brook grows, so you and I must grow, and thus fulfill the purpose of the good God who gives us our life and rejoices in its beauty and service.

THE LORD'S CANDLES

In the eighteenth Psalm, David recites some of the great distresses and trials through which he has passed. He tells of the deep darkness of the storm that was only illuminated by God's lightning; tells how God plucked him out of the darkness and not only lighted the sky with his lightnings but lighted a candle in David's own heart, a candle of faith and hope and assurance, that scattered the darkness about him.

This suggests a very helpful idea. God means that each of shall give forth light in our own sphere. There is a sense in which we are to add to the light of Christianity and civilization in the world. When I was a boy and lived on a farm on the frontier, we used to go to church in an old log schoolhouse in the woods. Evening meetings in those days were always announced to begin "at early candle-light." There were not even oil lamps in the old schoolhouse; but there was an unwritten rule that each family attending the service should bring at least one candle. The first man who arrived lighted his candle and put it up in one of the wooden candlesticks or set it on the window sill fastened at the base in a little tallow drip—dripping the tallow hot and then steadying the candle in it before it cooled. And

so every man who came in lighted his candle, and as the congregation grew the light grew. If there was a small congregation there was a very dim light, and if there was a large congregation the place was illuminated by the light of many candles. Now the whole church is like that in so much as our added light is helping to illuminate the world.

But there is a peculiar sense in which each one of us is a candle of the Lord and should shine forth in our influence and give our testimony for him. Here comes in our individuality. Every man who is a Christian, although his candle is lighted at Christ's fire and is an addition to the light of Christian influence in the world, will yet shine with a light and beauty peculiar to himself. Though we are all the candles of the Lord the truth still remains that we are the Lord's individual candles and he does not mean that we shall all shine in exactly the same way. Each of us should seek to give our whole selves to God with such obedience that we shall be able to flame forth a perfect testimony for him.

Some people are very much disturbed because there are so many different phases of religious belief among Christians, and think that Christianity would be greatly enhanced in its power if we could bring everybody into one church and only have one kind, or type, of religious life. But I do not so read God's revelation of himself in the Bible, in nature, or in human affairs. And

while all bitterness of partisanship or sectarianism should be put behind us, I think the types of religious light which we see in the diversity of the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Quaker and the Methodist, only adds to the beauty and glory of the illumination which each are helping to make in the world.

What a high honor it is that God has given us the privilege of being individually a light for him in the midst of the world's darkness. Phillips Brooks, in a great sermon on that saying in Proverbs, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," recalls the fact that in certain lands for certain holy ceremonies they prepare the candles with most anxious care. The very bees which distill the wax are sacred. They range in gardens planted with sweet flowers for their use alone. The wax is gathered by consecrated hands, the shaping of the candles is a holy task, performed in holy places to the sound of hymns and in the atmosphere of prayers. All this is done because the candles are to burn in the most lofty ceremonies on most sacred days. With what care must the man or the woman be made whose spirit is to be the candle of the Lord! It is the spirit of our lives which God is to kindle with himself. The body is valuable only for the protection and the education which the soul gains by it. And the power by which our spirits may become the Lord's candles is obedience. Therefore obedience to God must be the great privilege

and desire of our lives, and this not a hard and forced obedience, but a ready, loving, spontaneous obedience like that which a happy, trusting child gives to an adored father or mother. We must give such obedience to God as the candle gives to the flame. At the touch of the fire the candle melts and feeds the flame with its own self. So we must give ourselves to feed the flames of love and hope and faith which testify to the goodness of God, and which light up the dark world to know and rejoice in the light of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Great Adventure

THE THINGS THAT LAST

So many things come only to go, and are so quick in the transition, that it is good for us frequently to take stock of the things that endure. For even in this transitory world there are some things that last. One of these is a kind deed. It may seem to pass in a moment, but really it never passes. It is like our memory of the flowers we plucked in childhood. The flowers died the same day, but the memory of their fragrance and of our delight in them and of the happiness they brought to the innocent heart of childhood is a part of our very being, and will be treasured forever on the wall of the soul. A kind deed is like that. Do one a real kindness and you may know, whatever waves of sorrow come after, that the effect of that kind deed will not be lost. Few of us, indeed none of us, are fully able to measure the value of kindness.

I remember a time in my young ministry when I was in deep trial and fighting against odds. I was in a little church, an old worn-out building that would seat, possibly, two hundred people, on the banks of the Columbia River. President Hayes and his wife were making a tour of the West. They came to the town where I was preaching to stay over Sunday. I was young and

unknown as a preacher, and they came to the church not because of me but because they were members of the denomination and liked to worship with their own church. And so, with only an hour's notice, there came into that dingy little church the President of the United States and his wife, Gen. O. O. Howard, and many other uniformed officers. I preached the sermon—a plain, simple, Gospel sermon, such as my sermons always have been and are yet—the one which I had prepared for my own people, with all the earnestness of my heart.

That afternoon a letter was brought to me from General Howard, saying that the President and Mrs. Hayes desired to see me after the evening service, at the General's residence, where the Presidential party were guests. And when my sermon was through in the evening a carriage waited to take me to them. I shall never forget the kind words which the President and his wife said to me about the sermon, and the service, and about the possibilities there were for me in my ministry. Nothing could exceed the kindness and tact with which they both carried out their evident purpose of not only giving me a delightful hour but of inspiring me with a new enthusiasm and a lofty ambition in my work. And a few weeks later I received from Washington a letter from Lucy Webb Hayes, enclosing photographs of the President and herself, and a further declaration of their pleasant memory of the Sunday

morning service in the little church, and of their faith that they would hear of my success. Coming as it did, at a time of severe trial and discouragement, the kindness of that good woman was like a cordial to my spirit, and gave me courage to believe that there was grander and nobler work for me to do.

Never fail to do a kindness when you have a chance. Long after you have gone home to heaven the people who have been comforted and whose lives have been sweetened will be passing on the inspiration you gave them in kindness to others.

Another thing that lasts is service. Selfishness with all its pleasures and ambitions is short-lived, and no man looking back over his life selects the hours when he had his own way as the hours when he was particularly glad or joyous. No; it is the times when we served some one that last in our own heart as a treasure. I have known many famous men and women who have made a great success of life, but when I have come close enough to them to get into their hearts a little, I have found that the memories which are sweetest and those which they most gladly recall are the memories of humble or unknown or unpopular periods in their lives, when they have carried the cross without even a glimpse of the crown of glory which was to come to them in the future. Service lasts because it brings us into fellowship with

Christ, who is the great Servant of humanity. Christ chose to come to this world and be among us as a serving man, and you and I must not be above our Lord. If we want permanent happiness we must cultivate the habit of service, so that in whatever position we may be placed we shall be sure to make it better for all whom we can help.

Another thing that lasts is a fellowship with Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Friend. Other friends may sometimes misunderstand us, and for a time the joy of their fellowship be lost; but Christ will never misunderstand. If our hearts are true to him he will always know it, even though appearances are against us. He will stand by us when we are poor just as truly as when we are rich. He will be just as cheerful and encouraging when we are sick as he will be good company when we are well and strong. We shall never outgrow him; we shall never get beyond him; he will always stand up before us higher than ourselves, yet bending to us in infinite sympathy and love, and always leading us onward. Our friendship with Jesus will get sweeter as we get older. This is true of very few things. I have known very few people who enjoyed the physical happiness of living as much when they were old as when they were young. It is a rare thing for a man to care as much about books in old age as in his youth. I think few people enjoy money as much in later years as

they do in the earlier years of life. To the old man or the aged woman many things in life have shown their emptiness and the hook has been found in many of the baits that lead men and women onward. But it is undoubtedly true that the friendship of Jesus Christ, the inspiration of his presence, the certainty of his divine sympathy, the comfort of his love, always get sweeter as we get older. No disease is able to destroy the appetite of the soul for spiritual delight. I have known a great many old Christians, and their increasing joy in Christ, their mellowing of heart, their growing tenderness of spirit, their keener realization of the personality of Jesus, and their hopeful expectation of soon being with him are among the most beautiful things I have ever known. Yes, the friendship of Jesus is one of the things that last.

SEEING THINGS AS THEY ARE

No doubt the young man who was private secretary to Elisha considered himself as clear-headed and common-sense a person as there was in the country. As a rule he had to be eyes for Elisha. It was his duty to look after his master, and he had to see things not only for his own protection but for the protection of the prophet. And so on that morning which has long since passed into history he got up a little earlier than Elisha and went out to look around and see how the weather was, and if there was any news stirring that would be of interest to the great man whom he served. And to his astonishment he found that in the night, while he and his master had slept, the Syrians had surrounded the city with a great army, and so far as he could see there was no possible escape for them. One would suppose that if he had been with Elisha very long he would have known better than to be so down-hearted about it; would have understood that God never deserted his servants and would find some way of taking care of his prophet. But he was very much discouraged and hurried back, exclaiming as he went into the house and told the story of the besieging army, "Alas, my master! How shall we do?" The young man must

have been much surprised at the way Elisha took his news, for that good man did not seem to be in the least excited, but said assuringly to his servant, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Now I suppose we have only a small outline or condensation of the conversation that took place here. There must have been a good deal said between these remarks and what happened later. I imagine the young man replied something like this: "O my dear master, you are surely deceived this time; for I myself saw the war horses and the chariots and the great companies of soldiers on every side. Before coming back to tell you I looked every way to see if there was a chance for us to escape, and they have not left a single place unguarded. The town of Dothan is entirely surrounded and we are hemmed in as though we were an army entrenched in a fortress. And, master, you are entirely mistaken if you think these cowardly village folks will be of any value to stand by us against those trained soldiers. They are scared out of their wits now. Every man I saw in the street was white and trembling with fear, and already they are beginning to talk about the advisability of taking you out to the Syrians and giving you up and begging that the town be let alone. Surely, master, you don't mean it when you say that there are more on our side than there are on theirs? You might just as well be undeceived at once, for there isn't

anybody on our side but just us two unarmed men."

And then with a smile on his face Elisha says: "Well, let us have our morning prayers."

I imagine the secretary thought Elisha was extremely foolish to take the time to pray when, according to his judgment, running would have been more in order; but they kneeled down together and Elisha prayed, and this was his prayer: "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see."

He then took the young fellow by the arm and walked him out into the street and told him to look. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

You see, the young man did see, but he didn't see things as they were. He saw the hosts of the enemy, but he did not descry the hosts of the Lord that were camped inside the enemy around the man of God.

A great many people to-day are like that young fellow. They have wonderful eyesight for seeing the enemy. If there is a trouble or difficulty of any sort looming up in the distance, real or imaginary, you may depend on them to take it in. Troubles don't even have to be real for some people to see them. They can see ghosts and hobgoblins and all sorts of weird giants that are full of threatening, but they do not see the hosts

of God that are sent to take care of those who do right and trust in the Lord.

I fear that many of us who call ourselves Christians and who are striving to be worthy of that name have yet our mornings at Dothan when the enemy looks large and dangerous and the friends are unseen. But it should not be so, for God has filled his Book with precious promises which assure us that the danger is never so near as the defence. Take this: "All things work together for good to them that love God." What enemy is going to get in between that and the man or woman who goes quietly along loving the Lord? Or take this: "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." What army of the devil can get inside that cordon of God's artillery? The fact is that the sincere Christian, however humble, may rest assured that whenever it looks as though evil would overcome him, though he is honestly and prayerfully doing the best he can, he is not seeing things as they are. Just as true as it was with Elisha at Dothan is it true now that the Christian's friends are more than his enemies. God did not love Elisha any more than he loves you. And he has promised to take care of those who trust him and love him and honestly serve him. Let us not run from the foe, but resist him in God's name; and pray the Lord to give us better eyes, that we may behold the great spiritual armies which fight for us.

L. of C.

HOW TO GET RID OF YOURSELF

Christ proposes to give a man rest of soul by getting him out of himself and causing him to forget himself in some new service. Nothing is more wearing or a more fruitful source of unhappiness in the long run than to be self-centered. If our thoughts and plans, our hopes and fears, our ideals and ambitions, all center in our own personal success, and in adding to our own personal comfort and happiness, there must come many a day of infinite self-disgust and weariness when life does not seem to be worth living. Those people who are yawning themselves out of life because they have found everything they have tried to be a failure, are doing it because they have not learned that there is anything better to do than to take care of themselves. Poverty and riches have little to do with the case. You will find just as many well-to-do as you will find poor people for whom life has lost its spice and enthusiasm. It is not a question of capital but of character.

Now Christ's way to freshen life and fill it with hope and courage is to draw us out of our own yoke of sorrows and trials and get us into a new yoke, a new harness, and thus interest us in new burdens. And he declares that in so doing the

yoke will seem easier, the burden lighter, and we shall find rest unto our souls.

Of course we know what Christ's yoke is. When he was here on earth in the flesh, all the troubles and needs of the blind and the deaf, of the hungry and the lame, of the lepers and the fever-stricken, all the sorrows of men, from a withered hand to a demoniac possession, interested him, aroused his sympathy and became a part of his burden and yoke. Christ yoked himself to all the sorrows of mankind. Wherever a man was found who had trouble, whether a man anxious about his sick boy or a mother following her son to the tomb, or smaller matters —as where men had fished all night and had caught nothing—Christ entered into the case with sympathy and helpfulness and added it to his burden. And if we are to take up Christ's burden and wear his yoke, we must be yoked with the sorrows and troubles of men, and a part of our burden will be to try to lift the world up toward God and to help every sad heart toward the light.

Yet, thank God, that is only half the case. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light because, while he is yoked with the sorrows and troubles of men and women on the one hand, he is for that very reason yoked on the other side with all the wisdom and power and blessedness of Almighty God. That is what makes the burden light and the yoke easy. Many a man who works in the foundry or the shop for long hours goes through

the whole day with a light heart because of his yoke—fellowship with a loving wife and children at home. On the one hand he is yoked to long hours and hard work, but on the other his yoke takes hold of love and gentleness and thankful appreciation, and that makes his yoke easy and his burden light. So when for Christ's sake we share with our weaker brother and add his burden to our own shoulders, the doubled burden is made lighter because it brings us into happy fellowship with our divine Lord.

As we come into fellowship with Jesus, and are yoked with him in burden-bearing and in labors of love, he opens to us the secrets of God's tender care over those who love and serve him. In this way we get rid of our doubts and fears concerning God's providential care over us. No one who knows God as Christ does, who looks up into the Heavenly Father's face with that perfect spirit of childhood, can doubt that God intends good for his children and is able to bring it about.

Christ's perfect confidence in God comes out in the illustrations which he uses to show us the completeness of God's care. One day it is the lilies to which he points, asking his friends to mark how they grow and with what beauty they are clothed, and drawing the assuring lesson that the God who paints the lily with such resplendent colors will not forget the children made in his own image and likeness. Another day he points to the sparrow—a little cheap thing, two sold for

a farthing and five for two farthings, and yet not one of them forgotten by God. And if he cares for the little bird he surely will not forget his children.

What a precious thing it is to have that kind of a faith in God! And you can only obtain it by getting rid of yourself in a working fellowship with Jesus Christ. If you will go into partnerhip with the Saviour and seek every day to bring blessings to somebody, feeling as he does that every man you can help is your neighbor and that everything that hurts your brother is your own personal enemy, thus putting your shoulders in close touch with Jesus underneath all the burdens of humanity, you will be brought into such a relation to God that the spiritual and the supernatural will appear real to you.

In the greatest emergencies of Christ's burden bearing, in his temptation in the wilderness, and in the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane, angels came and comforted him; and angels will come to you and soothe you when you need them if you are wearing Christ's yoke and bearing his burden.

A CROWN FULL OF STARS

The kings and queens of the world, as well as their subjects, have always vied with each other in having the finest crown. Many of these crowns are decked with precious stones of great beauty and brilliancy and of enormous value. The crown of Russia is at present said to be the richest in diamonds. There are three crowns in the Imperial treasury entirely composed of these precious stones. That of Ivan contains eight hundred and eighty-one diamonds. The crown of the famous Peter the Great contains eight hundred and forty-seven of the same brilliant jewels. But the dazzling crown of Catherine II surpasses them all in that it blazes forth with the light of two thousand five hundred and thirty-six marvelous diamonds. One of the most remarkable of these diamonds is the "Orloff," now set in the top of the Imperial scepter, and on this account sometimes called "The Scepter Diamond."

Our Heavenly Father, whose kindness is beyond all our thought, compares to precious jewels all those who yield their hearts to him. The prophet Malachi says that the Lord keeps a book of remembrance, and in that book he writes down the names of those who fear him and think

upon his name. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

What a delightful suggestion is contained in that figure! If we could imagine a diamond having reasoning powers we could easily believe that it would be filled with joy and rapture to be put in the crown of some great and good king, some splendid personage who ruled with wisdom over his people and was beloved by them. But the God of heaven and earth declares that the humblest man or woman or child who thinks upon his name and seeks him shall be cherished as one of his jewels.

An immortal soul, then, is a brilliant jewel, a diadem in the crown of the Lord. If that be true, we can understand how the Lord appreciates the work of those who give themselves with self-sacrifice to snatch these priceless gems from the dirt and mire of sin and bring them to shine in his crown. There is some suggestion of what he thinks about it in the book of Daniel where it is said: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

There is a chapter in the book of Revelation which begins with the verse: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her

feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." I have heard of a family of twelve children whose mother was a sincere Christian. The father died while many of the children were yet small, but the mother worked hard and kept the family together, and one by one through her tears and prayers and her devoted Christian life she won all twelve of them as jewels for her Lord. And when she died they were all twelve in the church—happy, earnest Christians. I don't wonder that that family of children, now grown to be men and women, asked the minister to take that sun-clothed and star-crowned woman in Revelation as a text for his sermon. How she will rejoice in those twelve stars in her crown through eternal years in heaven.

I presume a great many of us have already made up our mind that it is not to be our fate to be extraordinarily rich or famous in this world, and some of us have come to know by our observation at least that there are a great many limitations to such happiness anyway. But it is possible for every one of us to add some stars for the Lord's crown and at the same time to get some stars for our own.

Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians, whom he himself had won to Christ, says: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Paul understood that his crown was made

constantly brighter by every soul which he won to the Lord. To win one soul from sin is a great thing to do. To make one life brighter, to insure the happiness of one heart, to cause the clouds that shut in one immortal soul to disperse, so that the sunshine of hope and courage shines through, is a great thing to do; so great a thing that it is beyond our power to estimate it at its full value. The Scriptures declare that he who converts a sinner from the error of his ways saves a soul from death and hides a multitude of sins. We think it a great thing to save life, and men who do it are held in remembrance. Yet that is only the life of the body. But to save a soul from the darkness of despair and fill it with light in this world and all worlds is a glorious privilege.

Many fail to become soul-winners because they wait for some conspicuous opportunity and do not appreciate the privilege of reaching some humble person that is near by. Great soul-winners always count every soul that can be influenced as a shining star to be won. It is said that after the conversion of Dwight L. Moody, and his acceptance as a member of the church, his Sunday-school teacher said about him that it was very unlikely the young fellow would ever be very useful, and when the young convert wanted to take part in prayer meeting it was suggested to him that he could best serve the Lord in silence. But young Moody was not to be dis-

couraged, and set to work to do the first thing he could to honor Christ. He rented four pews in the church and kept them filled with men and boys. Then he asked if he might become a Sunday-school teacher, and was told that he might if he would bring in his own scholars. Next Sunday he marched in at the head of eighteen ragged boys whom he had collected during the week. That was the beginning of the work of the mightiest soul-winner this world has seen since the days of Paul. And yet there are many of us who could do that much. And the doing that would show us how to do more, and both our happiness and our usefulness would be multiplied. Every one of us may go to heaven if we will with a crown of rejoicing that shall be full of stars.

IS LIFE LONG OR SHORT

A wonderful statement is made in the ninetieth Psalm, where Moses says of God: "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Who has not at some time wondered how that could possibly be so—wondered why things could look so very different to God than they do to us? We usually explain it by saying that God, who has existed from all eternity, and who has a clear view of the immortal years, regards lightly these brief measures of time which seem so long to us. But is there not another answer and a better one? Is it not rather that God is so busy with the great work of the universe, his attention is so constantly taken up with the interesting problems connected with carrying on this world and ten thousand other worlds like it, that time flies away on rapid wing?

However this may be, it is certainly true with us that we may always make life seem long by making it empty, and we may always make it too short by filling it full of earnest and important work. The people who find time so long that they want to "kill" it are the people who have not learned to interest themselves in the vital life of the world. Instead of wanting to kill time,

people who are living earnestly often wish they could multiply the hours of each day or else multiply their own capacity for work. The reason life seems so much longer to children than it does to grown-up people is that the childish mind has not come to grapple with a great variety of interests, and a little mill often finds itself running empty. To those who do not follow Paul's example and when they become men and women put away childish things, life will still seem long after they are grown.

All this is important because none of us will do our best work so long as we feel that there is abundance of time and no call for arousing ourselves to our best efforts. Human nature works best under the whip of necessity, and if we feel that we have more time than we need to do our work then there is not much likelihood that we shall get it done. The mind is quickened and made alert when the pressure of immediate necessity is put upon it. Nothing can be more fatal to successful evangelistic work, the doing our duty in winning people to Christ, than the feeling on our part that "there is time enough yet." Multitudes have failed of their best opportunities because of that. If every one of us were really and earnestly awake to the fear that this present winter was the last opportunity we would ever have to win those who are not Christians to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, the result would be marvelous in our exertions; and yet it

is no doubt true of some of us (and who can pick them out?) that this is the last chance.

When Mr. Moody was a young boy, before he was a Christian, he was in a field one day with a man who was hoeing. The man was weeping, and he told Moody a strange story, which he never forgot. He said that when he left home his mother gave him this text: "Seek first the kingdom of God." But he paid no heed to it. He said that when he was settled in life, and his ambition to get money was gratified, it would be time enough to seek the kingdom of God. He went from one village to another and found nothing to do. When Sunday came he went into a village church, and what was his great surprise to hear the minister give out the text, "Seek first the kingdom of God." The text went to the bottom of his heart. He went away from that town, and at the end of a week went into another church, and heard the minister give out the same text, "Seek first the kingdom of God." He felt sure this time that it was the prayers of his mother, but he said calmly and deliberately: "No; I will first get wealthy." He went on, and did not go into a church for a few months; but the first place of worship he went into he heard a third minister preaching a sermon from the same text. He tried to stifle his feeling, to get the sermon out of his mind, and resolved that he would keep away from church altogether, and for a few years did keep out of God's house. His

mother died, and the text kept coming up in his mind, and he said: "I will try to become a Christian." The tears rolled down his cheek as he continued: "I could not; no sermon ever touched me; my heart is as hard as that stone"—pointing to one in the field.

Moody could not understand what it was all about at the time, but after he went to Boston and was converted, the first thought that came to him was about this man. When he got back he asked him mother: "Is Mr. L—— living in such a place?"

"Didn't I write to you about him?" she asked. "They have taken him to an insane asylum, and to every one who goes there he points his finger upward and tells him to "Seek first the kingdom of God."

The next time Moody went home the mother told him the man was in her house, and he went to see him. He found him in a rocking-chair with a vacant idiotic look upon his face. When he saw Moody he pointed to him and said, "Young man, seek first the kingdom of God." Reason was gone, but the text was there.

Let us not make the fatal mistake of this man. The time is short; let us arouse ourselves to appreciate it, and throw our whole souls into the work of laying up treasures in heaven, where no moth can corrupt and where no thief can break through or steal.

MULTIPLICATION OF BLESSINGS THROUGH SHARING

God has made us for human fellowship, and we are starved and dwarfed in every way when we live selfish lives. Nobody is so poorly taken care of as the man who shuts his sympathies away from his fellows and devotes himself entirely to looking out for himself. It is just as sure as the law of gravitation that if we divide with others God's good gifts to us we multiply instead of diminishing our blessings. A wonderful illustration of this fact is found in the story of the widow woman who took Elijah to board. Elijah had been camping out for awhile by the brook Cherith, and the ravens had been bringing him food, two meals a day, and he had had good spring-water from the brook; but there was a drought in the land, and so God sent him to Zarephath, where he was to call at the house of a widow woman and find his place of entertainment. He found her out gathering up sticks to make a fire, and he asked her for a drink of water, and as she started to go and get it he stopped her and begged her to bring him a piece of bread with the water. The woman answered, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil

in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." But Elijah assured the poor woman that if she would divide what she had with him the Lord who had sent him would see to it that her food did not give out until the famine was over. And the good woman believed him and divided her last meal, and though Elijah boarded there for a long time, they had plenty to eat, "and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah." And not only did the woman have plenty to eat for herself and child; but afterwards, when her little boy sickened, Elijah saved him from death.

This old story reveals a law of God which girdles the earth. When we hold any blessing that comes to us as given not for ourselves only but for our brethren as well, God multiplies it so that in blessing others we ourselves receive still greater blessings. Unselfishness is an invulnerable armor in any world which belongs to God

In the Roman army there was a law that no one should approach the Emperor's tent by night under penalty of death. One night a soldier was found near the royal tent, bearing in his hand a petition which he wished to present. He was at once sentenced to die. But the Emperor, hearing voices without, asked what the trouble was, and learning that a soldier had invaded the for-

bidden grounds to bring a petition to him, gave this command: "If the petition be for himself, let him die; but if it is for another, spare his life." It was found that it was a plea for two fellow soldiers who had fallen asleep at their posts. God is still more gracious, for when we come to him with petitions for others he will also hear our request for ourselves. It was when Job, forgetting his own great losses and troubles, besought God in behalf of his friends, that God turned his own captivity and brought joy again into his heart and life.

There is no department of human service where one may see more remarkable illustrations of this great truth than in the efforts of Christians to share their experiences with those who do not know Christ and the joy of his salvation. No Christian ever yet sought out some poor hungry sinner and brought him to the heavenly feast who did not find the Bread of Life more delicious than before to his own taste.

By sharing what we have with others we give a practical exhibition of our trust and confidence in God. We show that we are not afraid to trust God to give us more blessings. We often pray God to do for others what he has already given us the means to do in his name. One of the requisites of real prayer is our willingness to enter into fellowship with the Lord in bringing about the results which we desire. There is no real genuineness to any prayer for the help of a

needy neighbor when the one who prays it has abundant means to relieve his neighbor's distress and yet will not do it. So there is no real genuineness in your prayer for the conversion of your friend, or for the saving of some lost sinner, when you yourself are unwilling to speak to him or bring to him by your own testimony the knowledge of Christ's great love.

I have heard of a man who prayed fervently every morning in his family prayers for the poor in the community; but he was never known to give anything to the poor. One morning, at the conclusion of the family worship, when the usual prayer had been offered up for the poor and destitute, his little boy said: "Father, I wish I had your corn-crib." "Why, my son?" replied the father. "Why, because then I would answer your prayer myself." That little story is susceptible in application both to temporal and spiritual matters. Many of you are praying to God to save sinners; you are asking him for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the church services, and on the efforts which the pastor and others are making for a revival; but at the same time you are personally acquainted with a dozen or it may be a score or more of people who are not Christians, and yet you let week after week go by and do not say a word to them about Jesus.

Let each one of us co-operate with God and we shall see wonderful days of salvation. Share

what spiritual blessings God has already given you with your unconverted neighbors, and you will find that "the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail."

MAKING LIFE PEACEFUL BY MAKING IT IMPORTANT

The message of the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah is that true peace is to be had only through harmony with the great Heart of the universe. There is a bread which does not satisfy; there is a water which does not slake the thirst. The reason is that the human Heart is too great to satisfy its hunger on the things that perish; the longing of the soul is too deep to slake its thirst at the streams of earth's pleasures. There is a music which charms for a time, but which never gives abiding peace. To catch the strains which satisfy, one must incline the ear and listen to heaven's anthems of immortality.

This message is full of hope, for it tells of the God who has mercy and whose ways of pardoning are generous and abundant. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. His ways are nobler than our ways. His purposes run deep through all the round of the year. Rain and snow, frost and heat, sunshine and shadow all work together to fulfill the deep purpose which he has to beautify and make fertile the earth as a garden in which his children are to grow. His purpose may seem to be thwarted by some great storm, by a season of bitter cold, or by days and nights

of drought. But it is only seeming; his purposes are not thwarted; in the end he gives "seed to the sower and bread to the eater."

Now we are assured through all these figures and illustrations that if our purposes are only great enough, if we catch the spirit that abides underneath all transient things in God's world, then we shall have a deep, abiding peace that the transitory trials and sorrows of life will not be able to disturb. We may be shut about in our way like travelers who are snowbound for a day and a night, or even a week of days and nights; but we shall not fret or worry if our purposes are in harmony with God's and our confidence rests sure in him. In that case we shall have no doubt that when the snow and ice of difficulty melt away we shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorns of to-day the fragrant balsam fir shall spring up about us to-morrow. Instead of the briers and the brambles of the present, in the long run the myrtle shall rejoice our eyes.

You can always make life fretful and full of worry by making it narrow and shallow. If your purposes are small, then of course you must worry about details, and little things must either give you what pleasure you have or your annoyance. Make your purposes great, make your life important by devotion to high ends, and you can

afford to bear with self-composure the temporary annoyances of life. It is the shallow stream that chafes most at the rocks and boulders which impede its path. Some one sings:

Deep the stream and silent—
Scarce I hear its flow—
What a noise its current
Made a few days ago!

Round the stones it fretted
On its shallow way—
Babbling in vexation
Over each delay.

Came the heavy rainfall,
Swelled the river's might.
Now its stony troubles
Are unheeded quite.

So, when our complaining
Tells of constant strife
With some moveless hindrance
In our path of life,

What we need is only
Fullness of our own—
If the current deepen
Never mind the stone!

Let the fuller nature
Flow its mass above,
Cover it with pity,
Cover it with love.

A LIFE ON FIRE

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, in the ninth chapter, he sets forth with great clearness the difference between a prudent, careful Christian life, where a man seeks only to come within the requirements of the letter of God's commands, and that of one who is so grateful to God for the innumerable mercies bestowed upon him that he is never satisfied with the return he can make but is ever aglow with desire to do more to show his love for Christ.

Paul uses some very striking illustrations to bear testimony to his own fidelity and loyalty to Christ. He calls attention to the fact that he has as good a right to have a wife or to take a sister about with him on his travels as any of the other of the apostles, but he gladly denies himself the comforts and privileges which other men have that he may carry the Gospel the farther and be the more effective as an evangelist. He calls attention to the fact that he would have a perfect right to expect a salary for the work which he performs. He asserts that the man who plants a vineyard has a right to eat the fruit of it, and that the man who herds the flock has a right to live on the milk. He is sure that the God who would not let them muzzle the ox that was used

to tread the corn would guarantee to him the right to a salary as a minister; but so great is his devotion to the cause of Christ that, believing as he does that in establishing the infant church he must make the people to whom he goes feel that he has no interest in them but their salvation, he denies himself the comfort of being supported by them. So earnest is he about it that he exclaims: "It were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." And then for fear somebody would think that it was simply a proud boast of his own self-sacrifice and goodness he continues: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" And therefore, feeling that he is so greatly indebted to Christ that everything he can do is a small return for the love of Jesus to him, he says: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."

Somehow I feel that there are many of us who need to get more of that spirit. I think we are altogether too independent and proud in our attitude toward our church work. If it goes just to suit us we are all right; but when we think we are not shown proper consideration, or matters are conducted in a way that does not meet with our approval, we are often too ready to feel that we are at liberty to throw up our church duties and do as we please. But has a father the right

to abandon his duties as a father because he sometimes has to give up his plans and wishes in the conduct of household affairs? Has a mother a right to repudiate her duties of motherhood, and fail to fulfill her obligations to her children, because they have sometimes to be performed under perplexing conditions? Has a citizen the right to consider himself released from all obligations as a citizen to the government which protects his person and property because, forsooth, the party which he opposed was elected to power? If not, then the Christian certainly is not at liberty to consider himself free from his obligations to Christ and humanity because the conditions under which he is called upon to perform his Christian duties are for the time being trying to his patience and, it may be, humiliating to his self-esteem.

The cure for all this is to have Paul's spirit. Paul was able easily to endure things which would otherwise have been impossible to him because his soul was aflame with devotion to and love for Christ. He was willing to deny himself anything in the world that stood in the way of his being a successful evangelist of the Lord Jesus. How strongly this comes out in his declaration that, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." "And this," he says to these Corinthians, "I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

Brethren, is not this the spirit we need—a spirit that will put us into sympathy and fellowship with those who have severe limitations, who are held back by many restraints, and who must fail utterly unless their brothers and sisters in the church will have charity for them and be patient with them? We cannot have the patience we ought to have unless our love for Christ is so great, and our love for those who are trying to be Christians is so earnest and true, that we will overlook a great many things that we would otherwise severely criticise. What a difference there is between a life that is negative—doing only what one thinks he cannot get along without and still keep up his fair name in the church—and a life that is thrown with a full heart into loving service of God and man! Paul expresses it in another place perhaps better than any one else ever has when he says, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

If we are not already on fire, let us pray God to kindle our souls to a white heat. Charles Wesley had the right idea when he sang:

Jesus, thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad;
Then shall my feet no longer rove,
Rooted and fixed in God.

O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow!

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SYMPATHY AND PITY

These two words are often confused in the public thought. People many times have pity aroused at the sight of suffering when they have no sympathy whatever with the sufferer. Sympathy has for its foundation stone genuine respect for a person simply because of his humanity; while pity need have no respect at all, but is stirred in an emotional way at the sight of any unusual discomfort or sorrow. Sympathy gives us the power to put ourselves in our brother's place. We think how we would feel if we were in the same position. We look through our own eyes from his standpoint. One may do a great many kind deeds through pity; but pity is only copper, where sympathy, issuing in brotherhood and fellowship, is gold.

Christ often showed pity toward men, but his pity issued from his sympathy. If a man was hungry he fed him, but as a brother in need, never as a hungry animal. If a man was sick of palsy, or was a leper, or was blind, he healed him; but not to get rid of his appeals or because his misery annoyed him. He ever saw the man back of the misfortune, and healed his body only as an approach toward the restoration of his man-

hood. He asked a drink of water of the woman of Samaria, but his real drink that evening was to turn the woman to righteousness.

Paul shows us very clearly his idea of the distinction between pity and sympathy in the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, when he says that a man might, through pity, bestow all his goods to feed the poor and yet get no credit whatever for it in heaven because it lacked the loving sympathy which alone gives true value to deeds of charity.

Never, perhaps, does goodness count for so much as when it expresses itself in sympathy. A human heart is always hungry for sympathy. If it cannot have the highest quality, it will feed on the lowest.

A rich man was walking out with his little boy one evening, and in passing the cottage of a German laborer the boy's attention was attracted to a very commonplace little dog at the gate, and he wanted his father to buy it. Just then the owner of the dog came home from work, and was met by the dog with every demonstration of joy. The rich man said to the owner: "My little boy has taken a fancy to your dog, and I will buy him. What do you want for him?"

"I can't sell dat dog," said the German.

"Look here," said the man of wealth, "that is a poor dog, just a common cur; but as my boy wants him, I will give you ten dollars for him."

"Yaas," said the German, "I knows he is a

very poor dog, and he ain't wort' almost nottin', but dere is von leetle ding mit dat dog vat I can't sell—I can't sell de vag of his tail ven I comes home at night."

Laugh as you will, there is deep pathos in that old German's idea. To know that somebody looks after us in longing when we go away; to know that some heart is more joyous, though it be only a dog's, when we come home; to know that there is sympathy somewhere for us, is one of the great necessities of life.

An intimate friend of John Ruskin says he was once at dinner with that great man when, as they were enjoying a rhubarb tart, the visitor happened to say that it was the first he had tasted that season, and remarked how delicious it was. Ringing for one of his servants, Ruskin said: "Please tell Jackson I want him." When he came into the room his master said: "Jackson, I am very pleased to tell you that your first pulling of rhubarb is quite a success; and my friend here, who has had some pie made of it, says it is delicious."

After the dinner was over a servant came in bringing a number of lighted candles. The windows being shaded by the overhanging trees above, the room was almost dark, even before the sun had gone down. After placing the candles, as she was leaving the room she said: "Please, sir, there is a beautiful sunset sky just now over the Old Man."

The professor rose from his chair and said:

"Thank you, Kate, for telling us." He then left the room, but soon returned. "Yes," he said, "it is worth seeing." And he led the way to an upper window.

It was a glorious sight, the sun sinking behind the Coniston Old Man Mountain and the mist and ripples on the lake tinged with a crimson flush. The two men sat silently in the window recess till the sun went down behind the mountain. Ruskin was no doubt thinking of the sunset, but his visitor was thinking most of the charming relation and sympathy manifested between master and servants.

The greatness of a man's nature comes out more beautifully perhaps in sympathy than anywhere else. A new and beautiful story has recently been published concerning Abraham Lincoln. It was while he was a member of Congress and was home in Springfield, Ill., during the Congressional recess. He was going down the street one morning when he saw a little girl standing at the gate with her hat and gloves on as if ready for a journey, but sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Why, what's the matter?" inquired the great tall Congressman.

And then she poured out her little broken heart to him; how she had arranged to take her first trip on the cars that day, and the expressman had failed to come for her trunk, and she was going to miss the train.

"How big is the trunk? There's still time, if it isn't too big." And he pushed through the gate and up to the door.

She took him up to her room where her little, old-fashioned trunk stood, locked and tied.

"Oho!" he cried. "Wipe your eyes and come on quick."

And before she knew what he was going to do he had shouldered the trunk, was downstairs and striding out of the yard. Down the street he went, as fast as his long legs could carry him, the little girl trotting behind drying her tears as she went. They reached the station on time, and Abraham Lincoln sent his little friend away happy.

I doubt if any other scene in the splendid life of that noble man reveals more beautifully the simplicity and grandeur of his heart. It is the same grade and quality of action which afterward, when applied to national affairs, made men love him all over the world.

If we open our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ into its inner sanctuary, and permit him to sit at the table and dictate our conduct, all our lives will bloom out in a sympathy which will make the most common career sweet and beautiful with the Christ spirit.

THE HARP-STRINGS OF THE SOUL

In the 104th Psalm we have pictured with much care and detail the beauties and glories of nature and the goodness of God in dealing with his creatures. It is wonderful how much is packed into that Psalm! It talks of the God who covers himself with light, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain; who makes a chariot out of the clouds and uses the winds for wings. It is a wonderfully picturesque Psalm. The springs which burst out of the hillsides and run down through the valleys, the birds that build their nests along these little water courses, the droves of cattle that find pasture on the hills, the vineyards and olive groves and fields, the cedars of Lebanon, the fir trees where the storks build their nests, wild goats and conies; the changing seasons of the year, the day, and the night, in whose darkness the young lions go out seeking their prey, are all enumerated. Reflecting on all these things the Psalmist is impressed anew with the fact that God cares for and feeds each one of them, and that none of them could live without God's ceaseless protection; and as his heart overflows at the majesty and goodness and love of God he bursts forth into a most delightful melody of thanksgiving.

I think it would be well for us to notice the

strings on this harp, because every reason that then existed for its grateful melody exists to-day. The first of these is meditation: "My meditation of him shall be sweet." How much we lose when we go rushing along through the world without so mastering ourselves as to take time to meditate upon God and his dealings with us. The reason so many lives are barren and spiritually uninteresting is because they have no times of sweet meditation on heavenly things. Do not make the mistake of supposing that you must always have ideal circumstances surrounding you in order to have meditations that are perfumed with the atmosphere of heaven. A great many of the sweetest Psalms bear evidences of having been written in times of great trial and hardship. Many of those written by David were composed when he was a wanderer and had to hide himself away in a cave or in the mountains; but under such circumstances he was able to meditate upon God and his goodness. Though he was driven into the hills, he could not thus be driven away from God. When he saw a stork building her nest in a fir tree, or a wild goat standing aloft on some jutting crag, or heard at night the roar of some young lion seeking his prey, David said to himself as he meditated, "The God who cares for these things and does not forget them will surely not forget me." And as he meditated the bitterness went out of his heart, love and hope came in, and his whole life was sweetened.

Touching this string of meditation jars another string, and that is gratitude: "I will sing praises to my God." I am sure we shall always be grateful after any genuine meditation on God's goodness. It is when we act or say things in haste that we are not grateful. It is impossible to count up God's mercies, and to take account of all the things that are still left which through God's kindness may yet minister to our happiness even on the darkest and most trying day, without there rising up in our souls an anthem of praise to God. When we address God nothing, unless it be confession of sin, so befits our lips as gratitude. We ought not always be asking and never thanking the Lord. The thankful soul is the happy soul. Show me a man who is ungrateful, who is always receiving and never giving back in words of gratitude, and I will show you one who in the very nature of things can never know real genuine happiness. A thankful spirit is as great a blessing to the giver as it is to the one who receives the gratitude.

If these two strings of your harp are touched I am sure they will arouse a third: "I will sing unto the Lord." How natural it is for a heart that is grateful, and is communing with the Lord in meditation, to burst forth into happy song. Christianity is the greatest singing religion in the world. This is because there is more hope and good cheer, more promises of good things to come, more present gladness in the heart of the

sincere Christian than in the disciple of any other religion the world has ever seen. Christ is the great hope bringer. When the angels came to sing at his birth they said to the shepherds that they brought glad tidings, and wherever Christ is preached men are made glad. It is not only our privilege but our duty to live glad lives, and song is the most natural expression of gladness. I think we ought to sing more than we do. We ought to sing more in our homes. Ours is a singing religion, and we ought to live up to it. Christian song has great power to banish the blues and brighten our outlook on the future.

If we strike all these notes we shall get courage to go on our way rejoicing. The Psalmist felt so uplifted as he meditated and praised and sang that he determined to keep on in that good way as long as he lived.

If we give ourselves up to the fascination of soul-music that is aroused by meditation upon God and communion with him, our hearts will be made so glad and we shall be so charmed with our heavenly conversation with Christ that we shall be saved from many of the haunting fears of life.

Mrs. Duncan Stewart, a favorite in the highest circles of Europe forty years ago, was wonderfully gifted in the art of conversation. She was an intimate friend in the home of Disraeli. Through the affection of the royal family of Hanover for her eldest daughter, the king and the queen showed her constant marks of consider-

ation and favor. The king was blind, and the brilliant conversation of Mrs. Stewart so delighted him that she would save up for his benefit every interesting story she heard. One day she was telling him a story as they were driving together. The horses suddenly started, and the carriage seemed about to be upset.

"Why do you not go on with your story?" asked the king.

"Because, sir, the carriage is just going to upset."

"That is the coachman's affair," said the king. "Do go on with your story."

I think there is a good lesson for us in that story. If we will give ourselves up often to sweet meditations on God's goodness, and enter heartily into the purpose of the Lord Jesus in this world, we shall be so charmed by our fellowship with him that we shall not be alarmed at everything that threatens to upset our plans, but will realize that after we have done our best the security of our future is the business of him whose promise is that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

IN WHAT RESPECT CAN THE CHRISTIAN OF TO-DAY IMITATE JESUS

Though there has been a great deal of discussion recently upon this question, the inquiry is by no means novel. Paul wrote on it a good many years before Sheldon. In the opening of the eleventh chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, Paul made a direct appeal to them to follow him in the same way that he followed Jesus. Now that gives us a little clue, I think, to Paul's idea of our inquiry. As we examine the life of Paul we can see what he thought was the Master's desire as to the manner in which he should imitate him. And we can often learn a good deal about things by finding what they are not like. If we pursue that course in this case we shall take note of the fact that Paul did not pursue Christ in the outward manner of his life. Christ remained in that little land of Palestine all his life long. He went about doing good, and picked up here and there a friend, but he did not undertake any wide field of evangelism and made no attempt to carry his message beyond the country in which he was born. Paul, however, was soon led out beyond all this narrow sphere into the wider world. His vision of the man of Macedonia he took as a call to the

great Gentile world, and he went from city to city arguing with the people, bearing witness to Christ, and turning the world upside down by his magnetic and powerful oratory. Everywhere he went he organized churches, and he kept track of them afterward, wrote them letters and visited them as he had opportunity.

Now I think this suggests to us a certain negative line of thought in regard to our own conduct. We cannot imitate Jesus in many things connected with our outward life. For instance, we cannot all be unmarried men. And a man who has a wife and children is, in the very nature of the case, widely separated from Jesus in the manner of his personal life. Again, Christ was never a public official, and a man who has official relation as a general in an army, as the governor of a State, as a judge in court, or as a policeman of a city, occupies an outward relation to his fellow men entirely different from anything which is illustrated to us in the life of Jesus on earth. Christ lived in a very simple age. There are many things in this complex society in which we are living that so far as outward method and manner are concerned are so unlike the humble life of Palestine nineteen hundred years ago that the biography of Jesus points no index finger to any path through the perplexing artificial growths that surround us in our daily life.

But now let us turn to the other side, and see in what respect Paul followed Jesus. In the first

place, he imitated Christ in the reverence and prayerfulness of his life. From the day Jesus spoke to him on the way to Damascus and Paul cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Paul lived a reverent, prayerful life. In that he imitated Jesus. His constant recourse in every time of trouble, in every perplexity of his experience, was to prayer. He felt all the while that he was in delicate, sensitive touch with God. He felt that he was under the direction of the Holy Spirit. How much many of us are losing because our prayers are formalities. They are not hypocritical, we are honest about them, but we somehow feel that God acts on great formal lines, and we do not think of breathing out our hearts to him as we would to a dear friend who is just at our elbow, or whom we could call up on the telephone and counsel with without a moment's notice. That is where the average Christian loses beyond all computation. One of the most effective Christian men I have ever known was Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, and he kept in touch with God in such a way that he walked hourly with the feeling that the Lord directed and guided him, not in a general way, but as one friend might lead another, taking him by the hand. God wonderfully used him for the salvation of souls and the comfort of his people. His face glowed with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Once when he called at the house of a parishioner, a Catholic servant girl, who was new

to the house, on going in to her mistress to announce him, said that she had forgotten his name, she had been so excited; for, said she, "the man has the face of an angel." Surely we may imitate Jesus and Paul by living in this spirit of prayerfulness.

Paul followed Christ in another respect in that his duty was ever the supreme thing in his life. When the disciples came back from Samaria with food, and found Jesus at the well where they had left him, and could not persuade him to eat, he, having won a soul to God while they were gone, said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." The supreme purpose in Christ's life was to please God and to do his work. That was the great joy and gladness of living. Paul, too, was like that. Everything else was only incidental. Paul did not grumble at being shipwrecked; he did not mind being let down over the wall in a basket; it did not count though he fought with wild beasts; there was no complaint when he endured chains and imprisonment; he worked making tents and supported himself while pouring out his life to bring blessings to others, and did all, as Christ did, for the joy that was set before him. It was his meat and drink to do the will of God and complete the work which he had given him to do. We may follow Christ in that respect. We may imitate Jesus by setting our hearts on doing our duty to

the full; on giving our whole soul and spirit to the work which God has given us to do.

Then I think it all narrows down to this: We cannot walk in Christ's steps in many of the paths he trod, but we can live in his spirit in all the ways of our human life. In our attitude toward God and toward our fellow men we can live in the spirit of Christ. His spirit was reverence and love toward God and sympathy and love toward his fellow men. He kept his heart ever open toward God, so that he never doubted the presence of heaven in his life; and he kept his heart ever open towards his fellow men, so that he uttered no word and did no deed in relation to them that was not inspired by love. And by God's help we may imitate him in this, and thus live the Christ-life before the world.

Let us not be discouraged if our performance has come so far short of our hopes, but let us rather act on the determination of Paul, and forgetting those things which are behind, press forward toward that which is before, keeping our eyes upon the goal, which is a character and a personality that after awhile, if we are faithful, shall be in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

THE VALUE OF CASTLES IN THE AIR

All the best work of the world has been done by men who were ever building castles in the air, dreaming souls who believed more than they could see. Men whose faith does not go beyond their sight are always limited and circumscribed in the possibilities of their achievement. A man who dreams of bowing suns and moons and stars has no limit to his horizon. Joseph the dreamer is ever a type of the man to whom all things are possible. For, after all, the greatest things are out of sight. Paul says that it is the seen and temporal which is only transient, it is the unseen which is eternal. He is a poor man indeed, however many times a millionaire the world may count him, who has no wealth save that which an earthly tax-gatherer can tabulate. Just now the seen and the temporal attract much attention. They are in sight and impress themselves upon the senses, and there are many careless souls who are ready to exclaim in the language of the old proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." But it depends on the bird, and on what you want the bird to do. If you want to eat the bird and thus lose it, or if you enjoy keeping it in your hand, just looking at it and gloating over your possession, that is one thing; but if you want

a bird to sing and warble forth its glorious music, if you want it to soar in the air with the sunshine on its wings, carrying a little of heaven with it wherever it goes, then a bird in the bush is worth a great many in the hand.

Joseph went down into Egypt a poor slave, to be auctioned off like any other merchandise brought with the caravan. Outwardly he was poor enough, but really he was richer than any merchant in that company. His wealth was invisible, unseen, but none the less real, and none the less available when the time came. On the day when Joseph stood before Pharaoh, and through the insight which God gave him interpreted Pharaoh's dream and was made prime minister of Egypt purely because of the unseen spiritual wealth which he possessed, there was not a purse-proud merchant in all Egypt that would not have been glad to exchange properties with him.

High ideals and lofty ambitions which crystallize our visions into purpose and determination are the most valuable resources any man or woman can have. Who of us has not seen young men and women with good health, strong bodies, clear minds, excellent opportunities, and yet infinitely poor because they were bankrupt at the point where it counts most? They have no castles in the air to lead them over the path of exertion and self-denial to great victories. A boy may be as poor and ignorant as was Abraham

Lincoln on those nights when he lay flat on his stomach mastering books by the light of a pine torch; but he is rich if, like Lincoln, he has castles in the air supported by untiring exertion and determined will. "The man of Macedonia," who led Paul and his companions on their great mission among the Gentiles, was a castle in the air which seemed so splendid that Paul risked his life and gladly endured all sorts of persecution that he might attain to it.

Christ is ever seeking to arouse in us the spirit of the dreamer that will not be satisfied with the commonplace and vulgar achievements of life. He holds up before us a vision of the perfect man. He declares that we are to be like him, and we must not be satisfied with anything else; we must not think of working as slaves work, without fellowship, but must rise to such a high plane that we shall do nothing without the consciousness that our yoke in which we work has its other bow about the neck of Jesus and that we carry no burden that is a stranger to the shoulders of our God.

Multitudes of good people rob themselves of the sweetest and most delicious joys of life in that they do not give themselves over to the full enjoyment of their high privilege as the children of God. How much Thomas lost through that glum blue, forbidding way he had of doubting all the joy and happiness which had come to the other disciples! But even Thomas believed

finally, and cried aloud with reverent gratitude, "My Lord and my God!" Surely we, who have so much evidence of the divine kindness in the world, ought to yield ourselves with glad surrender to feast upon the promises of God's Word without allowing one cloud to rest on the sky of our confidence. It is a sad thing for one who names the name of Jesus to go through this world with the head down and the heart walled in, not realizing that it is a world full of the rustle of angels' wings and bright with the messengers which ascend the stairway from earth to heaven. The sky as well as the ground on which we walk belongs to us; let us go with our heads up and our hearts aglow. Let us build air-castles out of God's promises; they are both beautiful and safe places in which to dwell.

I lately read of a man in the South who dug a cavern several feet deep in his front yard, and every morning he went there to pursue his literary work. But you and I know people who live in caverns all the while—underground dungeons into which the light never comes. They are not pleasant places in which to live, and, thank God, the genuine Christian never lives there. If we will go out into the forest and the quarry of God's Word, we shall find strong timbers and illuminated stones with which to build a castle in the air against which the gates of hell can never prevail and which the darkest night cannot shroud in gloom.

Longfellow, singing of the little boy with "brown and tender eyes" who was building his castle out of the blocks on the floor and listening to fairy legends as he rode his father's knee, looks to the future, dreaming for him, and says:

"There will be other towers for thee to build;
  There will be other steeds for thee to ride;
There will be other legends, and all filled
  With greater marvels and more glorified.
Build on and make thy castles high and fair,
  Rising and reaching upward to the skies;
Listen to voices in the upper air,
  Nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries."

THE RISEN LIFE

The best evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fact that he has now the power to pull men out of the slough of despond, to lift them up out of the mire and clay of sin, to place their feet upon the rock, and put new songs of thanksgiving and praise upon their lips. Every man or woman thus lifted up into a new life is a new volume of evidences of Christianity, a volume written in the red blood of human life that men will read and believe quicker than any other book of testimony. Christianity must always be judged by the kind of people it makes. Paul declares that if we really are risen with Christ, if our hearts, our love, our faith, our hope have followed him up out of the grave until we have really seen him, as Stephen did, at the right hand of the throne of God, then we shall be inspired to live a life of high thought, of pure imagination, of brave deeds—a wholesome, noble life that will touch the world with the helpfulness of Christ.

Much is said about the self-sacrifice demanded of the Christian and about the self-denial of a Christian life; but let it always be understood that it is the kind of self-denial that lifts us up and gives us something better than what we have lost for Christ's sake.

Not long ago a marriage solemnized at the Castle of Miramer in Austria-Hungary attracted worldwide attention because of the sacrifices which the bride made. She was the Princess Stephanie, daughter of Leopold, King of Belgium. She had been married in her girlhood to Rudolph, only son and heir of Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, and she naturally expected that in the course of time she would become Empress of Austria. But all such hopes were destroyed in 1889 by the mysterious death of the dissolute Crown Prince, her husband, at the Castle of Meyerling, either as a suicide or the victim of a murderer. Since that time she has lived in state as a member of the Imperial family. Now, however, she has become the wife of Count Elsmere Lonyia, a Hungarian nobleman. The marriage was resolutely opposed by her own relatives in Belgium and by her late husband's relatives in Austria. The latter warned her that if she married she would forfeit her right as a member of the Imperial family; but she sacrificed her rank in order to wed the man she loved. Thus she became of lower rank through her marriage. But no man or woman ever does that through sacrifices made to become a Christian. Christ offers just the opposite to us if we pledge our love to him. The humblest soul or the noblest that accepts Christ as a Saviour and friend is raised to the highest dignity; and at last, when the great multitude of ransomed and redeemed saints shall

sing the rapturous songs of praise to Christ in heaven, the highest and the lowest of those who have been Christians here on earth will join with one another in singing praises, shouting their anthems "unto him that loved us and hath made us kings."

We may be sure that whatever Christ has promised in his Word, or whatever he has done for others whose records are treasured there, he is able to do for us; and we may be certain also that no commandments are given to us that we cannot by Christ's help obey.

A young English officer was marching to assault a position that was considered impregnable. A fellow officer said to him, "It cannot be taken." The brave young soldier replied, "It can; I have the order in my pocket." And take it he did. So there is nothing to which God has commanded us in his Word, or to which the Holy Spirit directs us in our daily life, that we cannot do in Christ's name.

The highest and noblest life that men and women have ever lived is possible to us if we walk in fellowship with Jesus Christ. What we need to do is to keep in close touch with our divine Lord.

If we are to live this higher life, this risen life of Christ, we must live in an atmosphere where prayer will be natural to us and be to us a regular source of nourishment and strength. Dr. Wayland Hoyt says that he saw one day the memoran-

dum of a good Christian mother. It was a list of a great many things she had to think about and see done and get done during the day. Little things like these: "Moths, camphor, cedar chest, buy beans, leak in refrigerator, castor-oil, hairpins, bluing." And the thing that astonished and on reflection inspired Dr. Hoyt was that right in the midst of that long catalogue of fragmentary notes of a mother's and housekeeper's daily duties, there was thrust this item, "Read and pray." When he saw that he knew what made that woman such a good mother, he knew why, with all her burdens, she was sweet-spirited and self-composed and ever able to give counsel and comfort and good cheer to those who were weak or discouraged. It was because prayer was her regular source of nourishment; it was just as regular as the worry. She lived her daily life on that high plane; her conversation with God was the natural and accustomed thing to do. The same wise precaution on our part will bring about the same results. No man can live the risen life in his own strength. Such a life can only be sustained by communion and fellowship with the risen Lord.

THE BEAUTY OF THE SUMMER FIELDS

During the last few weeks I have traveled many thousand of miles through a wide stretch of the summer world, reaching from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Atlantic, and from the mountains of New Hampshire to other mountains in Virginia. I have looked upon a great diversity of scenery; but back of it all, and beyond all, that which has left its deep impression on my mind has been the beauty of the summer world. It has impressed me more from the fact that it is a toiling season. The fields are full of workmen, hot, dusty workmen earning their bread by the sweat of their brow. People work in springtime as well, but somehow it seems different then. In the springtime the whole world is coming out of prison into freedom; the earth as well as man has Easter time; the woods, the orchards, the hillsides and the valleys are laughing in foliage and flowers, and the atmosphere is so full of hope and courage that there is a certain rollicking spirit about labor that makes it seem more like a picnic excursion than a time of hard grinding work; but in summer time there is no such illusion, the fresh impulse of the spring has spent its force and work is work.

And yet all this workaday world of August

and September is beautiful beyond description. Think how grateful we ought to be for the marvelous colorings of the summer fields. Suppose they had all been draped in black or a dirt brown to match the hard sober toil, how accursed indeed would be the lot of the man who works in them; but, instead, they riot in color and in fragrance. How beautiful is a ripe field of oats, white almost as the snow in winter; and how rich and golden a field of wheat ready for the reaper! And the corn! Over and over again, as I have looked on the great fields of corn in the Hocking Valley or in the valley of the Muskingum, or along the banks of the Susquehanna, I have thought of an army of knights of the olden times when men went to battle plumed and tasseled and adorned. Every cornstalk growing out of a rich soil, with its nodding plume, its rustling draperies and its great hanging ears of yellow gold, all colored as though the chemistry of nature had nothing else to do but to make it glorious, is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

And the fragrance of the fields! Who ever knew a perfume sweeter than the smell of ground when after a rain it turns from the farmer's plow with a track of robins following in the wake? Or what odor is so delicious as the breath of new-mown hay? Think you these are no compensation to the toiler? Yea, verily. Even the hedge-rows and the fence-corners and the little pieces of swamp left in the marshy places untilled

grow beautiful seemingly on purpose to make the worker in the fields happy in his surroundings. Nothing there is ugly from the golden-rod with its crown of yellow to the thistle which makes you forget its spikes in the gorgeous splendor of its bloom.

Even the birds and animals who are marauders of the summer time are handsomely adorned. The squirrels that work havoc in the edges of the wheat, the cherry birds that take toll of the red fruit, and even the black crows, the highway robbers of the cornfields, are handsome and picturesque. The summer world would be lonely without them.

Now what does all this mean? Can it mean anything else save that God believes that even toil may be made beautiful and charming. The wheat is no less valuable because it is golden, nor the corn less nourishing because of its beauty. God would teach us in the beauty of the summer fields that work may be adorned and made delightful, and surely that was his purpose in us. Paul said to some people whom he was trying to bring to their best, "Ye are God's husbandry," or, as the Revised Version has it, "Ye are God's tilled land." Surely the Lord is not more kind in his purpose to the fields than he is to us. Indeed, we know that he cares much more for us, for did not Jesus say, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows"? Then we may know that the God who covers all the summer world of labor

with a charm and an attractiveness that no artist is able to catch even in momentary glimpses, has in his heart wonderful conceptions of beauty when he thinks of the possibilities that are in us. He knows that it is possible for us to become so gracious and beautiful in character that our most toilsome and prosaic day shall have all the rich beauty of a golden field of wheat and all the charms of a rustling army of ripe corn.

Some of the figures which are used to describe God's purpose in us are very suggestive. Take that one in Isaiah where the Lord offers to make us into a balsam fir tree instead of a bush of thorns and briars. Who would not make an exchange like that? And yet it is within the reach of every one of us." We excuse ourselves altogether too easily for the lack of beauty in our daily lives. People who do not excuse themselves for the lack of a clean collar, or polished shoes, have plenty of excuses at the tongue's end for a fretful spirit, a harsh or cruel temper, or a selfish and greedy appetite. And yet how infinitely more ugly is the defect in the moral nature, the spot on the clothing of the soul, than the lack of beauty in the raiment of the body!

Let us cherish the great fact that the beauty of the summer fields is God's pledge that we too may be beautiful in our characters though engaged in the severest toil. Do you remember the Psalmist's prayer, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us"? He was praying for

exactly what the Lord does in nature. The summer fields are beautiful because God pours his own heart out on them, and if we will open our thoughts and affections to receive the heavenly influences we too shall be clothed upon with the beauty of the divine nature. And if we do this, we shall be adorned with a raiment of the Spirit that will not be for special occasions only, but one that will clothe us with charms for every-day life.

THE MOODS AND TENSES OF EVERY-DAY LIFE

The prevailing mood in which we live is very important. A man is to be judged not so much by occasional acts as by the prevailing and controlling mood. One of the worst moods for a Christian is that of lethargy. It is better to make serious blunders now and then in the course of earnest and aggressive work for righteousness, than to never make any blunders because we are not doing anything.

Martin Luther once told this allegory: The devil held a great anniversary at which the under imps were convened to make report to their master. "I let loose the wild beasts of the desert on a caravan of Christians," said one, "and their bones are now bleaching on the sands." "What of that?" said Satan; "their souls were all saved." "I drove the east wind," said another, "against a ship freighted with Christians, and they were all drowned." "What of that?" said Satan, "their souls were all saved." "For ten years I tried to get a single Christian asleep," said a third, "and I succeeded, and left him so." "Then," says Luther, "the devil shouted and the night stars of hell sang for joy!" If your prevailing mood in the church is that of slum-

ber and lethargy you may be sure that you make the devil glad. Another dangerous mood for a Christian is a mood of indifference as to his influence with others. Frequently we hear people say, and sometimes with a very pious air: "It doesn't matter what people think of me; I know my heart is right." But is it true that it doesn't matter? It most certainly does matter what people think of you. A gentleman writing in the *Outlook* gives this striking illustration of the danger of being misunderstood by other people: In sight of his office window is a church tower on three sides of which is a clock face. On one of these one of the hands has been broken, making the clock tell strange tales. Of course there are people who do not understand the circumstances and are misled. At heart the old clock is all right; but that does not alter the seriousness of the fact that people have been late in meeting their engagements and have missed their trains because the face is not an index of that which it covers. Our prevailing mood ought to be wide-awake and earnest, that our influence may be for Christ.

Our prevailing mood ought also to be one of courage. A visitor to Northfield says that he was taken into the room where Moody died. Over the bed on which the great evangelist breathed his last the visitor was interested to notice a magnificent engraving of "Daniel and the Lions." It was a picture which Mr. Moody greatly loved.

He lived his life in harmony with that picture. He was as brave as Daniel to do what he thought to be right. One of the greatest sources of his power was that his prevailing mood was invincible courage.

The Christian's prevailing mood ought to be one of sympathy. A little girl six years old, with big blue eyes that were full of tears, came to Bellevue Hospital recently with a cat in her arms. The cat had been wounded by a street car and one leg was badly mangled. At the gate the girl told Tom, the big policeman, the cat was hurt. "I want a doctor to help it," she said. Tom took her to the receiving ward where he found a doctor who was not busy. "Here's a case, Doc," said the policeman. "I ain't a——" what he was going to say was that he wasn't a cat doctor, but when he saw the little girl's eyes he broke it off and said, "Let me see." After examining the patient his comment was, "Pretty bad." Then he got some knives, a little bottle of chloroform and some bandages. "You must help me," he said to the girl. She aided bravely, though it made her pale as she watched the doctor's sharp knife and deft fingers. Soon the doctor had done all he could, and as the cat was recovering from the anæsthetic he said, "Now you can take your kitty home with you." "It ain't mine," the girl said. "I just found it. Now you take care of it. Good-bye." Now, the little girl lived in the mood of sympathy. If she continues in it, when she

gets to be as old as the Good Samaritan she will live the same kind of life.

But I want to say something about the tense in which we live. Some people live too much in the past tense. They get their heads turned back, and they look that way so much that the neck gets stiff until they can't get it round again. They are always seeing where they have missed it and vainly wishing they could go back and make it different. Of course they cannot do that, and so they are miserable.

There are other people who manage to get just about as much misery by living in the future tense. Things are not so very bad to-day, but to-morrow and the day after the clouds are black as night. And so they worry about what is going to come until they are weakened and enfeebled about all their work to-day. Living in either the past or the future tense in such a way as to get trouble and discouragement out of it is to deliver yourselves over to the demon of worry, and there are few things worse than that. Worry is a good deal harder than work. Some one sings about it very truly:

"It is not the work, but the worry,
That wrinkles the smooth fair face,
That blends gray hairs with the dusky,
And robs the form of its grace;
That dims the luster and sparkle
Of eyes that were once so bright,
But now are heavy and troubled,
With a weary, despondent light.

"It is not the work, but the worry,
That drives all sleep away,
As we toss and turn and wonder
About the cares of the day.
Do we think of the hands' hard labor,
Or the steps of the tired feet?
Ah! no, but we plan and ponder
How to make both ends meet.

"It is not the work, but the worry,
That makes us sober and sad,
That makes us narrow and sordid,
When we should be cheery and glad.
There's a shadow before the sunlight,
And ever a cloud in the blue,
The scent of the roses is tainted,
The notes of the song are untrue.

"It is not the work, but the worry,
That makes the world grow old,
That numbers the years of their children
Ere half their story is told;
That weakens their faith in heaven
And the wisdom of God's great plan.
Ah! 'tis not the work, but the worry,
That breaks the heart of man."

The only safe way is to live in the present tense. Yesterday we cannot reach except that we may repent of its sins and be forgiven, and the future has not yet come and will be sufficient unto itself on its arrival. To-day is our own. The duty of life with us is "now." To live humbly toward God, to live courageously and generously, reaching out our hands in a brotherly way and doing what good we can to-day is our

privilege. Every day lived right will make it better for us to-morrow, whatever that may be. To live each day as though we only had the one day on earth—the one day in which to do good, the one day in which to praise God, the one day in which to be loyal to Christ, the one day in which to make the world happy—that is the way to live in order to bring something of heaven into the present. And surely that is the way we ought to live; we who are only travelers passing through this world to our home beyond. As Joseph Luccock sings:

"We are pilgrims bound for home,
For the sunny, sunny clime,
Where the balmy zephyrs waft the sweets
Of endless summer time.
Where hearts are always gay,
Where fruits immortal grow,
And music mingles 'mid the scene,
Where joys unending flow."

THE BLESSINGS OF HARD WORK

The other day I asked two friends who were sitting together, "What are the blessings of hard work?" One immediately replied, "One is that it gives you a good appetite." Now I think that was a good answer. Hard work for the body or the mind gives a certain zest for nourishment, creates a demand for food, and God has so ordered it that the taking of food either physically or intellectually to a normal, healthy man or woman should be a pleasant performance.

It is a terrible thing to lose one's appetite. It is not an uncommon thing for the appetite to fail physically, and without any seeming reason no zest or desire for food is felt. To eat then is a weariness of the flesh, and unless the trouble can be remedied the entire health of the body will soon be undermined and the unnourished system rapidly fall into decay and death. I remember the case of a man who went away from home to try to get back his health, and who stopped for some time in that great palace-like hotel in St. Augustine, Florida. He wrote back to his family in the North wonderful stories about the beauty of his surroundings. The climate was balmy and delightful. The hotel was a dream of art. Bands of music regaled the guests at their meals. The

table was loaded with rare dishes and with a wonderful variety of tropical fruits. But he always closed his letters with a sigh. "It is all so beautiful, so romantic, so delightful," he said, "if I only had an appetite." The appetite never came, and it was not long before they brought him home to die.

An appetite is just as necessary in mental and moral and spiritual affairs. There is nothing more serious than to lose one's taste for the Bible, so that any other book seems more attractive; to lose one's appetite for listening to the preaching of the Word of God, so that the Bible stories of human life, of the struggle of men trying to climb out of the mire and the clay up to the Rock of Ages, no longer interest the mind and heart. To lose one's appetite for the prayer meeting; to reach a place where the strains of an opera stir one more than the great spiritual hymns of the church. That is a sad thing, for there can be no real spiritual peace and joy unless there be an appetite for spiritual food. Now, just as many a man who has been in the law-office or in the school-room or the banking-house for a long time, until he has got into a rut and lost his appetite, will go out home on the farm in the summer time and work in the hayfield and do chores around the barn until he finds himself coming hungry to his meals; so many a man who has lost all spiritual vitality and zest, if he will only put himself to work doing the things in which Christ

is interested in the world—trying to lift the burden off of some weary shoulder, seeking to lead some poor sinner into the light, trying to help some handcuffed prisoner of the devil to find his freedom—will find all his appetite for the Bible and the prayer meeting and the old hymns coming back, and he will be as hungry as ever for the feast of good things that God puts on the table for his workers.

The other friend, after a little reflection, said that one of the blessings of hard work is that we enjoy the rest that comes afterwards. That is a good answer also. No man knows anything about the enjoyment of rest unless he has worked until he is dead tired. People who never have been tired have no idea of the exquisite sense of relaxation which comes at the close of an honest day's toil. So there are many people in the church who never know the exquisite hours of restful communion, of quiet peace, that God gives to his tired children who have worked till they have used up all their strength in his cause.

But there is still another blessing of hard work, and that is the strength that can only come that way. There are some things you cannot buy with money, and one of them is strength. If a man could go into the market and buy strength by the bottleful, as you can quack medicine, what giants there would be in these days of millionaires! But strength is not to be had that way; it is personal, and great strength can never be

acquired except through exercise. It is through bearing burdens that men grow strong to endure. A man works until he has used up the vitality he had in store, and goes home at night saying to himself, "I have expended all the strength I had"; but the next morning, if he has had a good night's rest and plenty of nourishing food, he is conscious that he goes back a stronger man than ever. Somewhere, somehow, through the expending of his strength a deposit of added strength was made in his physical banking-house, and through his hard work he becomes a stronger man day by day.

Now the philosophy is the same in spiritual matters. It is by exercise, by hard work for the church, for the service of our brothers and sisters, that we become strong, morally and spiritually. It is only through temptation and strain that strong character can be developed. The eagle gets its mighty strength of wing, not because it gorges itself with more food than other birds, but because it flies many hours a day in the face of the sun. An eagle has been known to pick up from a barnyard a pig four times his own weight and carry its squealing burden away with ease. God means that we shall not be pigs simply to gorge ourselves on the good things of life, but eagles to mount up into the sky on great deeds intent.

THE FIRST FLUSH OF AUTUMN

Do you know the signs of the first flush of autumn? Have you seen one bough on the maple tree—one on the tree standing by the lake, or bending over the hole in the brook where the old trout hides—suddenly flame out into crimson and scarlet? Have you heard the hum of the threshing-machine in the fields where the shocks of wheat look like the thatched cottages in Scotland? Have you heard the roar of the blackbirds as they gather in regiments before the little aristocrats go south for the winter? Have you seen the wild geese flying overhead with their faces toward the equator, a huge triangle so far up against the blue of the sky that you cannot hear their conversation as they sail away toward the warmer waters and the milder skies? Have you felt the pause of nature, the brooding stillness hanging over the orchard and the garden? It is hard to describe it, but a sort of prophecy in the air tells that summer is departing and presages the cooler days and the new beauties and glories of autumn just at hand.

All these signs come into the first flush of autumn. They foresee a time of full barns and overflowing cellars, the storing up of rich treasures from the harvests of all the springtime toil

and all the busy work of the hot summer days. Something like that comes to us as men and women when we strike the middle line of our expected stay on earth. The seasons of life are much like the seasons of the year. Infancy and early childhood are full of squalls, and childhood grown a little older has much of April in it; especially the April showers that are to bring forth May flowers. May is beautiful both in the springtime and in the youth of human life. It, too, is a brooding month, when one wonders what is coming out of it all, whether it be in the promise of the fields or in the budding boy or girl. And June! "What so rare as a day in June?"—whether it be the June of the nest-building robins and the first early cherries; the June of the luscious strawberries and the roses, or the June of the "sweet sixteen" of girlhood or of the awkward and bashful but hopeful and ambitious boyhood in high school with eye toward the college.

July is a new epoch. Life is serious now, but it it is the seriousness of summer's heat and promise. It is a prosperous seriousness. Everything seems possible. Days are long, nights are short. The corn grows all the twenty-four hours and the young womanhood and young manhood have long days of confident assurance of success and short nights of doubt or trial. Sorrow may endure for the brief night, but joy cometh in the morning of a day that seems never to end. August, and the fields are white or golden; the orchards are fra-

grant with the early apples; the ears of corn are beginning to hang heavy on the stock. The rattle of the reaper is heard in the land; life is real, now; life is earnest. The season of picnics is almost past; work begins with the dawn and ends when it is too dark to see the sheaves in the field. How like life in those vigorous muscular years from twenty-five to forty!

From forty to fifty, which means September and the opening of October, is the first flush of the autumn. The career is settled; it may grow infinitely larger yet, but its outlines are marked. Until the man is thirty, or even thirty-five, he may be a lawyer, or a doctor, or a preacher, or a business man, or almost what he pleases, depending only on the limitations of his intellectual inheritance; but at forty he is one or the other, and he will change at his peril. The track is now open before him. Wise he is if he fixes his eye on the goal with deep, intense earnestness and strips himself more than ever for the race. They ought to be the best years so far in his life. They are the years when a man has all his resources at his command. The cellar of the mind and heart is filled with all the knowledge he has gained by his education in school, through reading, and by rubbing against men; indeed, all his personal experience in human life. He has a background to draw upon, resources that were utterly unknown to him in his youth. His judgment should be bet-

ter, his imagination should be more thoroughly disciplined and trained, his perceptions keener, his purpose more steadfast, his heart more mellow with sympathy and kindly fellowship than in any of the years of youth and early manhood up to the noon and beyond of life.

There is always a little touch of sadness in the autumn which I think is both reasonable and unreasonable. It is reasonable because the immediate past of spring and summer can never come again, and just before lies winter, harsh and forbidding. It is unreasonable because there are other springs and summers in God's bag of mercies, and, please God, they may have earlier crocuses, more fragrant violets, more luxurious roses, richer wheat fields, than those that are gone. It is unreasonable also from another standpoint, and that is that winter also is in God's order and has many blessings that are more beautiful than any other season of the year. It would be missed more, perhaps, than any other season if it were lost out of the calendar.

But, you say, "How is it possible for a man or a woman to get comfort out of such an illustration, in the face of the fact that the bounding limbs and dancing spirits of childhood, the optimism and boundless courage of youth, the strong muscles, and the conscious power of middle life are passing, and for many have passed, and we are facing toward the west with the certainty that childhood and youth and full mature

strength never can come back, and that old age with its weakness and its decay of power lies athwart the path in the near future?"

Yet we can face all that with a steady pulse and a quiet heart; face it because it is God's order and he knows best; face it because age with its wintry frost of white hair and weakness has its compensations to the child of God; face it because pure-hearted old men or women, with the sunshine of God upon their hearts and countenances, are necessary to childhood and youth and mature strength to hold the world steady and keep it rolling onward toward its final redemption. We can face it because we do not face disaster and final eclipse of our powers. There may be a few brief years while we tarry here, at the end, when our powers shall sleep to some extent, but soon the call will come, "It is enough; come higher." Then shall come a season of the year that this world has never known, a season in which springtime and summer and autumn and winter shall each have their beauty and glory merged into one blessed immortality; the season in which the innocence and beauty of childhood, the hopefulness and the enthusiasm of youth, the strength and dauntless courage of young manhood and womanhood, the rich and mellow fruitfulness of autumn, the glorious and exalted years of the old age of the saints, shall all be merged into one glorious experience that shall last forever.

This is the glory of our Christian faith. It gives us victory over weakness, makes us patient to bear pain, inspires us to smile through our tears, and nerves the heart in old age because "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." With Paul, we "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"; for we know that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

THE BAD AND THE GOOD KIND OF SENSITIVENESS

The wrong kind of sensitiveness is born of selfishness and egotism. Men and women who think they deserve a great deal of attention, and then feel they are not fawned upon and flattered as much as they imagine they deserve, are ready to hang their heads or burst into tears with the broken-hearted expression, "Nobody loves me!" Winifred Black hits the nail on the head when she says that the right way to answer that exclamation is with the natural query, "Why should they?"

Some one has well said that when a man looks either for slights or for opportunities of service he always finds what he is looking for. Haman was a good type of one kind of sensitive man. Haman fed on public applause, and he hungered for every one to bow down to him. And everybody in town did bow down to him except one old Jew named Mordecai, but so sensitive was Haman that all the bowing and scraping of a city full of people went for nothing because that stiff-necked old Jew would not bend his head. Haman was one bow short, and therefore miserable. Who of us do not know such people? It is the same kind of thing when a mother gets vexed and sor-

rowful, and is almost ready to take her child out of Sunday-school, because some other little girl or little boy is called on to speak oftener in Sunday-school concerts than is the child who is the apple of her own eye.

Another kind of sensitiveness which is bad is typified by Martha, at whose house Christ liked to go and visit. Martha was sensitive because Mary, her sister, did not express her love for the Master in pies and doughnuts and roast beef in the same way as she herself did. But Christ told Martha not to worry about it, for Mary had gotten deeper into the heart of things in her relation to the Lord than had she. How many times we are tempted to that kind of sensitiveness. Some people seem to prosper in a religious way, and yet they don't worship the Lord just as we do, and we are tempted to fret and get sulky about it. All such sensitiveness is mischievous. Let each one of us do his best according to his own light.

One of the most fruitful sources of trouble from sensitiveness comes from a temptation to fear that we will not be given the best things and be made as much of as some other people in the church or community. Now that comes from an entirely wrong idea of the source of happiness. Senator Chauncey Depew, in a speech in London, before the great International Christian Endeavor Society Convention, made this remarkable statement. Said he: "The way to be

happy is, if there is any good thing in you, to let others have it." That is, we get our happiness not by standing around like a beggar ready to catch what other people will throw to us, but by going forward like a king or a queen, in generous love bestowing the largess of our abundance upon every one who will share with us. The happy man is not the one who is sensitively fearing he will be slighted in the distribution of blessings, but rather the one who is seeking to make himself useful and helpful to others.

Now there is a good kind of sensitiveness, and I wish we had a great deal more of it. It is the kind which Philip had. He was very popular in Jerusalem, and everything seemed to favor him; but the angel of the Lord spoke to him and sent him away into the desert toward the city of Gaza, and he arose and went without a question. He went because he was sensitive to the Spirit of God. And as he went along the way, not knowing what God wanted him to do, but believing that God would bring it out all clear in the end, a great opportunity came to him. Suddenly there came driving along the road on which Philip was walking a man, the treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia, and he was sitting in his chariot reading one of the old prophecies. Of course Philip did not know what he was reading, but the Spirit of the Lord suggested to him that he should immediately join himself to this chariot. And so Philip ran along beside the chariot, and as

he ran he heard the man reading from the prophecy of Isaiah, and he shouted above the din of the wheels, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" I suppose the treasurer was greatly astonished when he saw him, and he shouted back, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Then he stopped the chariot and begged Philip to get up and sit with him, and explain the prophecy to him. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." That is the kind of sensitiveness that we need. Opportunities slip by us every day because we are not sensitive to the divine Spirit.

The late Rev. William I. Fee, a minister for over half a century in Ohio, was as sensitive as Philip to the Spirit of God, and God gave him mighty power to win souls. He was standing one day in one of the homes of his people, in Hamilton, Ohio, where he had just christened a child, when he saw pass the window the leading infidel in the city. The very moment he saw him it was strangely impressed upon his mind that he should hail him, and walk down the street with him as far as his own house. Leaving his overcoat and hat he ran to the door and called him, saying:

"Mr. O——, if you will wait a moment, I shall be pleased to walk with you as far as my house."

The man assented cheerfully; and Mr. Fee, excusing himself to the family, put on his hat

and coat and joined him. They walked together in silence to the corner of the next street, when the minister began to fear that he was placed in a very awkward position, to say the least of it. As they paused on the corner of the street he said: "Mr. O——, my conduct in hailing you as I did no doubt seems very strange to you, and needs an explanation. I tell you frankly that the impression to do this came to my mind like a flash. I was engaged at the moment in another matter, and I cannot account for it. I do not know why I did it; the only impression was that I should join you, and walk with you."

The man became pale; and after a moment, with the deepest emotion, he said: "I know. God Almighty sent you. I will tell you the truth. You may have heard some weeks ago that I was assaulted by an enemy and severely wounded. On examination the doctor informed me that the wound was mortal, and that my life would probably terminate very soon. My infidelity vanished in a moment. The sins of my life came up before me in awful array. I felt that I was a lost sinner. My soul was drifting toward eternity without help or hope. What should I do? Another examination took place, and, to my delight, the surgeon informed me that he was mistaken in the first examination, and had strong hope that I would soon recover. This gave me great joy; but the foundation upon which I have been building was shattered, and

the consciousness that I was a great sinner was as vivid as ever. I at once thought of you, and determined to visit you and ask your counsel as soon as I was able. I went to your residence; but had no courage to go in. I went again; but my courage failed me, until I went six times. At last I prayed God that I might in some way or other meet you and unburden my soul to you. And now, sir, I can't but regard our meeting to-day, strange as it may seem to you, as the answer of a poor sinner's prayer."

We may be sure that Dr. Fee led that man to Christ with great joy. That is the kind of sensitiveness we need, and if we have it we may be sure that it will banish the evil kind from our hearts.

VACATION RELIGION

There are several distinct dangers which confront the Christian in the vacation season. If he stays at home during the time when many people, either for business or pleasure, go away, he is tempted to feel that he is somehow imposed upon in having an added burden in helping to carry the load of church life when so many are free from it. He is also likely to feel that because many are away, and the services will be more lightly attended, that he might as well stay away too, and that it is not worth while to go ahead with his accustomed fidelity in church attendance and service. Now all these are sophistries of the evil one. Of course we need religion in the summer just as much as we do in the winter. People have sickness and sorrow and matters that perplex and irritate and doubts that fly forth like foul bats in the summer time as well as in the winter. Therefore we need the church of God, we need to steady ourselves with the public worship; and this need is often more urgent during the vacation than at any other time.

On the other hand, it is a peculiar opportunity to show fidelity to God and to the church. During the prosperous season of the church we may be led to attend for many other reasons than our

humble desire to worship God and to serve him with loyalty; but during the slack time we have the privilege of going to please God, and to stand by faithfully when our presence will count for a great deal. No one ever does anything like that for the Lord without receiving rich blessings in return. David established a precedent, long ago, that the man who stood by the stuff should share in the spoil equally with the man who went out to battle. That is very good, but God does better than that. He pays larger wages to the people who stand by him in emergencies and are faithful when the workers are scarce.

There are also peculiar dangers for the Christian who goes away from home. Vacations are good things for tired men and women. The bow that is always bent will after awhile lose its spring and refuse to send the arrow toward the target. But in going on a vacation it is very important to remember that many of the forces that hold us to goodness and make it comparatively easy for us to be Christians are slackened in their pressure. At home we are greatly upheld by the consciousness that everybody knows us, and that any deviation from the path of right will be quickly seen and remarked, and will bring discredit upon us. One of the powerful forces for righteousness in this world is a proper regard which every good man and woman has for the esteem and good opinion of their fellows. But when one gets away among strangers there is

often a sense of freedom from inspection, a feeling that what one does will not be commented on and will therefore do no harm. Such an idea is exceedingly fallacious; for whether we are known or not, a wrong act cannot fail to have its vicious and evil influence, just as surely among strangers as among people who know us. It will also have its bad effect upon us, and will deteriorate our moral nature; and, above all, it will be a sin against God just the same as if the whole world knew about it. Therefore we need to resist this devil of license which is always whispering his evil insinuations into the ears of people away from home.

Another temptation which comes to the Christian on a vacation is the thought that in vacation time he need not be careful about observing the strict duties of a Christian life. The giving way to that temptation has caused many a Christian on a vacation to lose a hundredfold more than he gained. He gained in body, but lost in moral and spiritual quality. The seeds of a worldly and irreligious life are often sown in vacation time and grow up afterwards to choke out the good seed sown by the Lord. We need to remember that it is when we are off guard, are unharnessed from a keen sense of responsibility, that the devil has the best chance at us. Many old proverbs grow out of this fact, such as, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop"; or "Satan finds work for idle hands to do." Many people who when at

home in the regular harness of every-day work were able to resist the devil, have been overthrown by him when off guard.

Christians away from home ought for many reasons to be specially careful to keep up their regular devotions. Prayer, and the reading of the Bible, and little opportunities for Christian service should be carefully kept in mind. This will not detract from the vacation; it will add to its joy, and at the same time will give us the opportunity of doing a great deal of good by the wayside.

I have known of a number of cases where the faithful Christian life of a tourist or a summer boarder, in the mountains or by the shore of a lake or the sea, has been the source of inspiration to some young man or young woman that has turned his or her entire career into a path of noble Christian service. A strange voice in a little country prayer meeting will often make a red-letter day of happy remembrance to a group of faithful disciples of Jesus, and will be to them a source of fresh impulse from the very heart of God.

In traveling on the cars, or on the steamboat, the opportunities for Christian service are ever abundant. The man who fights the temptation to be cross and peevish, who gives a soft answer to a petulant traveler and keeps, in spite of dust or heat, a sweet and cheerful countenance, makes the vacation world more religious and more Christlike.

LIVING UP TO OUR VISIONS

Paul never said a greater thing about himself than when he declared to King Agrippa that he had lived up to the heavenly vision that came to him on the way to Damascus. It is one thing to have a vision, and quite another thing to live up to it, though at the time of the vision it may seem a very easy thing to do. Vision hours are usually times of exaltation. At such times we are lifted up on high; we breathe a noble atmosphere; the heroic spirit seems the only air possible to us, and we feel that we can go right on without much struggle, keeping faithful to the highest standard and loyally pouring our lives into the doing of noble deeds. But it often looks very different the next morning. We find then that that which looked easy, and was easy in certain associations, requires, under different circumstances, all the grit and perseverance there is in us.

It is very important that we should get it thoroughly fixed in our minds that visions of duty and opportunity are not given us simply to revel in. Some people like to go to camp-meetings, or revivals, or great religious conventions where their minds and hearts will be stirred, just that they may dream dreams and see visions and revel in religious emotions. Then they go home and are

as cross and fretful and stingy and avaricious and mean-spirited all the rest of the year as if they had not had their religious picnic. There is no value at all in such performances. A vision is useless unless it leads at once to conduct. When Paul saw and listened to the Christ on his way to Damascus, he at once felt this truth, and his cry was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was not long until some one was leading Paul, still blind, on the way toward instruction and on to his great career of service.

Later on there came a vision to Paul of the great need of the Gospel among the pagan lands beyond; but that vision had its messenger, its "man of Macedonia," to lead him out from his vision of duty to perform the service demanded. There is no duty without its messenger if we are ready to follow. Many times, however, the messenger has to go off without us, and then the vision has been a failure so far as we are concerned.

When Peter was stopping at the house of the tanner, down by the sea coast, and there came that wonderful vision of the sheet let down from heaven, with its many kinds of animals, and the command came to Peter to slay and eat, he was scarcely roused from the vision before one came to tell him that three men waited for him at the door to lead him on the way to the house of Cornelius, where his vision was to work itself out in duty. If Peter had failed to follow those men,

that is the last we should have heard of Peter. But Peter was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, and his vision, lived up to, made him forever after a broader, nobler man.

God gives us visions in these days. Every day they come to us, these visions of duty, and we can either revel in them, and philosophize about them, and send the messenger away empty; or we may with the devotion and fidelity of Paul or Peter follow the way they lead and, living up to our vision, do service for God and man.

These visions come to us in many ways. Sometimes they come in a paper or a book that rouses our emotions even to tears concerning some oppressed people, some wrong in the community that needs righting in the strength of God and in fellowship with Jesus Christ. There are two ways in which we may treat that impulse, that heavenly vision. One is to let it expend itself in feeling; and if we do that it will not be long before we are harder-hearted than ever and more indifferent to righteousness. The other way is to follow the new impulse, the aroused emotion, and let it vent itself in seeking to right the wrong, to lift up the oppressed, to bring help to those in need. If we choose the latter course, and live up to our vision, we are lifted up into the atmosphere of vision; we climb to a higher level of life and in every way our hearts and minds are enlarged.

Almost every day we are stirred with some

vision from heaven that arouses in our hearts sympathy for some one whom we meet or hear about. We are prompted to speak the sympathetic, kind word, or by a little self-sacrifice to go and do a gracious, brotherly deed. If we do not respond at once the opportunity slips away, the chance to give vent to our sympathy passes on and is gone, and it will not be so easy to arouse us on another occasion. But if we speak the kind word, do the helpful act in a loving, helpful spirit, then our vision exalts us.

The same thing is true of new impulses that come to us for a holier, more consecrated, personal life. It may be you have gotten into a low tone of spiritual life. You have not given yourself over to wickedness, but your prayers are formal, your Bible reading irregular and joyless, and your service to the church has but little heart and spirit. Suddenly a sermon, or a prayer meeting, or the sickness or death of a friend, some volcanic occurrence, shakes you out of your lethargy and lifts you into an hour of vision and makes God and Christ and heaven and goodness seem more real and important, and your heart and soul throbs anew with longing and desire to live a bright, strong, vital, religious life. Ah, that is a glorious hour! It may be the source of fresh impulse that will drive you toward heaven with more speed than you have ever known. Live up to that vision, and all the years to come will be sweeter and more beautiful because of it.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Christian people, in harmony with many other folks, have a good many ups and downs, experiences on the mountain-top and in the valley, that are simply incidental to the ordinary trials and frailties of human nature. These are very often wrongly called the ups and downs of their Christian life. They are experiences that come to them as human beings, not as Christians; they come because they have a bad stomach or a good one; come because they have exposed themselves, and have the rheumatism; or because they have had a good dinner, and feel well over it. All such experiences, which have so much to do with our moods simply as human beings, are of no importance when we touch the higher question of one's career as a Christian.

What I wish to speak to you about is something very different. There are legitimate ups and downs in the Christian life. In the story of the Sermon on the Mount, the most lengthy of all the recorded sermons of Jesus, you will notice that it is stated that Christ went up into the mountain, and when his disciples followed him up, and gathered about him, he began that wonderful discourse which has had more to do with modern

civilization than any other address or sermon that was ever delivered. It was there that he gave them that wonderful paragraph about the "Blesseds." It was there that he searched deep into their hearts, and told them that Christianity was an extra superimposed on the ordinary stage of human life, indicating a high-water mark in the career of mankind. It was in that sermon that he used that wonderful figure of the salt and the light, and the city set on a hill, to tell of the beauty and usefulness of Christian character. It was in that sermon that he revealed to his disciples the immense superiority of Christianity over any formal religion, making it clear to his hearers that no formal ceremonial religion could take the place of a sincere heart-fellowship with the King of kings. In that sermon Christ taught his disciples about prayer; told them of the wonderful power of secret prayer on the public life, and gave them that model which we call the Lord's Prayer, and which millions of people repeat every day. All those wonderful sayings about laying up treasures in heaven, about keeping the inner eye of the soul single toward God and duty, the beautiful illustration about the fowls of the air that have no fields to sow and no sheaves to reap and no barns in which to store their goods and yet are fed of God, the picture of the lilies of the field that toil not nor spin and yet are beautifully clothed of heaven—all are in that sermon. It would be hard to find a sermon

anywhere with such a wonderful series of illustrations. The figure of the man taking the mote out of his brother's eye while there is a beam in his own; the warning about casting pearls before swine; the asking, and seeking, and knocking figure; the parallel of the straight gate and the wide gate; of the broad way and the narrow way; the picture of the false prophet that comes in sheep's clothing when he is inwardly a ravening wolf; the man who tries to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles; and finally, that tremendous picture of the two houses, built respectively by the wise and the foolish man, the one building on the rock and the other on the sand, both living alike comfortably until the storm comes, but when the winds beat, and the rain pours down, and a house is specially needed, the one built on the sand is washed away and destroyed, while the one founded on the rock remains as secure as before the storm began.

We are amazed when we see what a vast amount of truth and what a marvelous variety of illustrations were used in that sermon. Now that was a mountain-top experience for the disciples. It was the mountain-top of teaching. Christ lifted them up to a high intellectual and moral level, and gave them such instruction in spiritual things as he never had given them before. It is interesting to note that immediately afterward Christ led his disciples down the mountain into the valley, and the first greet-

ing that came to them was from the poor leper, who said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus cleansed the leper. Scarce was that good deed done than the centurion came to him, beseeching him for his servant who was very sick, and Christ spoke the word of healing for him. Then he came into the house where a woman was sick with fever, and as he touched her hand the fever left her. And so it went on, one thing after another, showing the disciples that we go up onto the mountain of truth to be instructed and to get wisdom only that we may be of service. People go to school, many times, and cultivate their minds with an entirely wrong idea of what culture means. They think of culture as a selfish thing; they want education and intellectual training simply for their own personal enjoyment; but the teaching of Christ's Sermon on the Mount and the deeds that followed it is that knowledge is given us that we may put it to work. Culture is nothing, or worse than nothing, unless it makes us better servants, better helpers, of our fellow men.

Another illustration of this legitimate kind of ups and downs of the Christian life is seen when Jesus took some of his disciples with him up onto a high mountain, and there was transfigured before them, and Moses and Elijah came and talked with him concerning the atonement which he was to make for the sins of the world. It was

a time of great spiritual exaltation to the disciples. They caught a new vision of the beauty and majesty of their divine Lord. Their hearts were so happy and satisfied about it that Peter wanted to build three tabernacles and stay there. But a little later Christ leads them down the mountain again, and the first person that meets them is a father with a poor afflicted child possessed with evil spirits, whom the other disciples had not been able to help. And Christ healed the child, and sent the father away with his little boy, full of gratitude and worship. And so these disciples who had been ready to linger on the Mount of Transfiguration were made to know that God takes us up into moments of lofty feeling and high emotions, that he gives us visions of the majesty and glory of Christ, not that we may linger there to build tabernacles on the mountain-tops, but rather that we may be encouraged and strengthened to come down again into the valley of every-day life, and be able in self-denying service for our Lord to conquer the devils that afflict men.

These are the kinds of ups and downs that belong to the true Christian career. It is right to make money, it is right to get culture, it is right to have lofty hours of worship and transfiguration; but riches and culture and Christian experience and communion must all be regarded by us as rich gifts put into our hands to make us more helpful in sharing the burdens and healing the

afflictions and sorrows of our fellow men. Whittier wrote truly when he said:

"The meal unshared is food unblest:
Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend;
Self-ease is pain; thy only rest
Is labor for a worthy end."

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE HOMES

Over in New England they are making more every year of what they call "Old Home Week." They choose a week in summer or early autumn which is to be celebrated as a week of reminiscence and home-comings. Invitations are sent all over the United States, across the sea, and all over the world where the sons and daughters of the little town or village have wandered. And many of them come home for that week. The day it opens, and, indeed, all the week, is full of beautiful incidents of reunion. I came down the railroad one day in New Hampshire, and passed through several towns which were celebrating this festival of "Old Home Week." At every station where such was the case bunting was in the air on all sides. The houses were covered with flags as though it were the fourth of July. Hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of people were at the depot to meet the train. The hacks and carriages were gay with flags, and with the printed ensign, "Welcome Home," on them. The band of music was there to lead the procession as the visitors left the train. The pathos of it was in the very air one breathed. There were tears of welcome on scores of faces. I rode in the train with two gray-haired men who when

they were boys had gone away from the town where they got off to take their part in the celebration. They had been away a great many years, and both had been very successful. They had won honorable names for themselves, and now they were coming home to see their comrades, the boys and girls they had gone to school with, who were now, like themselves, old men and women. They could not talk to me about it without tears, and yet their hearts were glad. The tears were a tribute to that love of home which is in the heart of man. Home is the most comprehensive word of human tenderness. It has been well said that "mother" is the sweetest word in any language, but the word "home" is still more comprehensive and precious, for it takes all the loved ones of the dear fireside into its gentle arms. As we get older we agree more perfectly with John Howard Payne, the homeless exile, who wrote man's sweetest song about home:

" 'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home!
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!

"An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
Oh! give me my lowly thatch'd cottage again!
The birds, singing gaily, that came at my call—
Give me them!—and the peace of mind dearer than all.
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!"

The Christian has still another home that is very precious to him, and that is his church home. I am very, very sorry for any Christian who has not found some church that is so much more precious to him than any other that it is in a very tender sense home to him. Some people fritter away the possibilities of such an experience by tramping about from one church to another, until they become in a moral and spiritual way like the vagrant who tramps about from one spot to another, eating what he can beg or steal, until he loses all sense of home and perhaps the very power to enjoy it. Some people simply get to be just sermon-tasters, Gospel vagrants, church tramps, who go wandering around, mere curiosity-seekers after every new sensation. They are great sponges, sustaining such religious life as they may possess, which is never very rich, from what they can beg or borrow or steal in the church where they camp for the day or night. They not only get no sense of home, and form no home ties, but they soon so deteriorate in their own nature that it is almost impossible for them to become helpful and beloved members of a home. A home is not a mere association of tramps; it is held together by ties, not only of love and sympathy, but of mutual responsibility and care and toil. So in a church home we get the home feeling as we get the feeling of responsibility for it, and as we come to regard it not only as a place where there is a feast, and where we may

be fed, but a place where we may feed others; a place where we may bear the burden as well as enjoy the blessings; where we may share the fellowship of Christ and his people in service as well as in benediction. It is sweet to have a church home, where somebody relies on us; where somebody misses us if we are absent; where somebody lifts their eyes to us for sympathy and fellowship; where we run our roots down in the garden of God and flourish under the great Gardener.

But there is still another home dear to the Christian, and that is our final home in heaven. We are only here on the earth for awhile, and home is speedily broken up as the children grow up into manhood and womanhood, and go away to college or to business or to build homes of their own. I met a good woman at a conference the other day, a minister's wife, and she said to me: "Just think of it, my baby has grown old enough to go to Germany to college, and there's nobody at home now but just my husband and myself." And a quick tear came into her eye as she said laughingly: "And that's why I am at conference." The home was broken, and soon death breaks it. And what is true of the first home is true of the second; the church homes change and pass away. But we are going home where all these things will cease, and we shall be at home forever. If we are living in the right spirit, and serving God with loving heart, this thought of the

heavenly home gets sweeter every year. Every year there are more people there that we know. Every year the current tugs more at the keel of our ship, and love's magnetism pulls harder at our heart, until we long to be at home with the dear ones who have gone ahead of us. Many feel as Jean Ingelow sung in her little poem, "Longing for Home":

"I pray you what is the nest to me,
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the West?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hope hath failed?
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be:
There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
The only home for me—
Ah me!"

Mar- 27 1991

MAR 11 1901

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 667 753 2